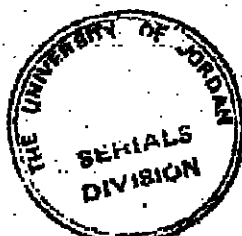


Israelis open fire across line

AMMAN (J.T.) — An official Jordanian spokesman said Friday an Israeli patrol opened fire across the demarcation line twice without any apparent reason. The spokesman said the first incident occurred at 2 a.m. Friday at the Zar Khar on the Zar Khar river near the demarcation line and the second firing came at 2.35 p.m. The spokesman said Israeli soldiers fired at the Jordanian patrol on the Zar Khar river. The Jordanian spokesman said the Israeli patrol fired at the Jordanian patrol on the Zar Khar river. The Jordanian spokesman said the Israeli patrol fired at the Jordanian patrol on the Zar Khar river.



Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جورديان تايمز يومية سياسية مستقلة عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية

Zogby: Support for Israel eroding

AMMAN (J.T.) — In the wake of the Palestinian uprising in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip and the moderate policies adopted by the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), the support for Israel has considerably eroded in American public opinion, a leading Arab-American activist said Friday. James Zogby, executive director of the American Arab-American Anti-Defamation Committee, also discussed the efforts of the Arab American lobby in the U.S. and the chances of countering the Jewish-American lobby as well as the impact of the changes in eastern Europe on relations between the Arab World and the U.S. Zogby was speaking in an interview taped by Jordan Television and conducted by Jordan Times Chief Editor Dr. Waleed Sadi. The interview will be broadcast after "News at Ten" on Jordan Television Saturday. Zogby was received by His Majesty King Hussein Thursday and the activist briefed the monarch on Arab-American activities in the U.S.

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Warns Israel against attack on installations

Iraqi leader offers plan to revive talks with Iran

BAGHDAD (Agencies) — President Saddam Hussein proposed a three-point plan for reviving stalled peace negotiations with Iran Friday, calling for direct meetings in Tehran and Baghdad and an unconditional release of ailing and disabled prisoners. Hussein also hailed his country's advanced arms industry, and warned Israel against attacking Iraqi scientific or military installations after the recent launch of long-range missiles and a rocket reportedly capable of putting a satellite in space. The Iraqi president spoke in a 30-minute address aired live by the radio and television to mark the 69th anniversary of the creation of the Iraqi army. He said: "We are seeking to open a new door for a dignified peace with Iran."

He suggested that "direct meetings between representatives of both leaderships be held alternately in Tehran and Baghdad under the auspices of the secretary-general of the United Nations. The direct dialogue will aim at reaching a common understanding of the clauses of (U.N. Security Council) Resolution 598 and fix a timetable for its implementation... provided that the talks are completed within a period not exceeding three months." Resolution 598 was adopted by the Security Council in July 1987. A year later, the two sides agreed to it and a ceasefire finally halted eight years of hostilities on Aug. 20, 1988. But peace talks launched under U.N. sponsorship after the truce were quickly deadlocked.

Tehran refused to discuss a settlement before Iraq withdraws from lands it occupied before the ceasefire, and Baghdad insisted on working out a new border demarcation accord that gives it total sovereignty over Shatt Al Arab waterway. Under a pre-war accord, the border between the two countries ran down the middle of Shatt Al Arab, a confluence of the Great Tigris and Euphrates rivers which forms Iraq's sole outlet to the Gulf. Iran claims Iraq holds 2,663 square kilometres of its territory. But U.N. experts say the Iraqis occupy only 1,000 square kilometres. As a second step towards reviving the stalled peace talks, Hussein proposed "an immediate exchange of all wounded and sick

prisoners of war (PoWs) under the supervision of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)." That, he said, would be followed by the release of the longest-held PoWs, mainly those captured in the early stages of the Iran-Iraq war that broke out in September 1980. He also called for registering thousands of prisoners who have not been included in lists provided to the ICRC. The Red Cross has registered 50,182 prisoners held by Iran and 19,284 in Iraqi camps. But U.N. officials and diplomats say there are at least 100,000 PoWs held by both sides. The Red Cross mediated an agreement to repatriate the ailing and crippled PoWs immediately after the ceasefire. But the accord



Saddam Hussein broke down after the release of only 400 prisoners with both sides accusing each other of falsifying the number of captives who were seeking asylum. The ICRC estimates 1,000 ailing or disabled PoWs are still held by both sides. The Iraqi leader also suggested, "in order to underscore (Continued on page 3)

King in Iraq for talks, to attend Army Day events

BAGHDAD (Agencies) — His Majesty King Hussein arrived here Friday for talks with Iraqi President Saddam Hussein and to attend Iraq's Army Day celebrations. The King, who is accompanied by a high-ranking delegation, including Prime Minister Mudar Badran, Political Advisor Adnan Abu Odeh and General Fathi Abu Taleb, army chief of staff, will discuss the latest developments in the Arab and international scenes and bilateral relations, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, said. The monarch, welcomed at the airport by President Hussein, is on a two-day visit to Baghdad as Iraq celebrates the 69th anniversary of the foundation of its army.

Jordan and Iraq are members of the Arab Cooperation Council (ACC), a four-country grouping that also includes Egypt and North Yemen. The ACC was formed last February. The Iraqi News Agency quoted the King on arrival as saying he hoped that peace "would spread over the region to provide an opportunity for the Arab countries to direct their capacities and potentials towards development and over-alls construction in various domains." He said he was extremely happy to visit Baghdad to share with the Iraqi people and army their celebrations of the Iraqi Army Day. King Hussein expressed confidence in the Iraqi army's combat capabilities and its ability to de-

fend the whole Arab Nation. The King noted the achievements made by the Iraqi army on behalf of the whole Arab Nation and spoke highly of its military manufacturing capabilities. King Hussein congratulated Iraq on the occasion of the Army Day, which, he said coincided with the beginning of a new decade. The King was accorded a grand reception headed by President Hussein and attended by Iraqi Vice-President Taha Muhiyeddin Maarouf, First Deputy Premier Taha Yassin Ramadan, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz, Cabinet ministers, members of the Iraqi Revolutionary Command Council and senior Jordanian embassy officials.

Hrawi sets up base in Beirut

BEIRUT (Agencies) — President Elias Hrawi, trying to consolidate his power over divided Lebanon, moved his base on Friday to west Beirut where his predecessor was assassinated. Hrawi, elected Nov. 24 two days after President Rene Muawad was killed, could not rule from the presidential palace at Bab el-Dar in the eastern sector of the capital because it is occupied by defiant Christian General Michel Aoun. Official sources said Hrawi's previous offices in an army barracks 50 kilometres east of Beirut, were not practical because ministers, diplomats and visitors found it difficult to get there. The new residence, previously used by Muawad, is some 100 metres from the headquarters of some 7,000 Syrian troops policing west Beirut. Hundreds of Lebanese and Syrian troops guarded the residence and closed roads leading to the house with cement blocks. Sharpshooters took up position around the building. Muawad was killed when a big explosion ripped through his motorcade. Muawad had used the same apartment, donated by Saudi Arabian business tycoon Rafi Hariri, as a residence. But he had set up office at the Prime Ministry, a 10-minute drive away. He was being driven home from the Prime Ministry when a remote-controlled car bomb explosion ripped through the motorcade killing him and 23 other people. "The president will not leave the building unless on foreign trips," a government source said on Hrawi. He spoke on condition of anonymity. "We want to avoid risks."

Amal, Hizbollah resume battles

BEIRUT (Agencies) — Rival Shi'ite militias renewed battles in South Lebanon Friday while wrangling over terms for a ceasefire to halt 14 days of fighting. Gunmen of the pro-Iranian Hizbollah and the Syrian-backed Amal fought with mortars, rockets and heavy machineguns near Kfar Hata village in Iqlim Al Tufah District, 40 kilometres south of Beirut, security sources said. Amal leader Nabih Berru urged Hizbollah to withdraw from five villages, captured from Amal since the latest conflict erupted Dec. 23, and accept a ceasefire call by Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Tuesday. Hizbollah Secretary-General Sheikh Soubhi Toufaily said it was ready to pull back only if Amal implemented a peace agreement reached last January between the two militias. Hizbollah accused Amal of not

Refugee eludes Iranian tanker

MADRID (AP) — A crippled Iranian tanker Friday threatened to become a modern-day flying Dutchman, as fearful authorities in three countries refused to grant it safe haven to transfer its remaining cargo of crude to a second vessel. At a weekly cabinet meeting Friday, the Spanish government confirmed an earlier decision by an international crisis committee to deny a request to tow the 560-metre Khar 5 to sheltered waters off the southern coast of Tenerife in the Canary Islands, a merchant marine official said. Eduardo Cruz, deputy director general for maritime safety and pollution control, said the confirmation meant the Khar-5 could not enter Spain's 200-mile economic zone around the Canaries archipelago "in its current condition." Meanwhile, warm waters, high seas and anti-pollution teams combined to disperse more than 90 per cent of the huge oil slick left behind by the ship that had threatened fisheries and resorts on the Moroccan coast, experts said. The French interministerial mission on the sea said it had lifted "all states of pre-alert" after information from French experts indicated "the risk of massive pollution (from the slick) has disappeared." The Khar 5 spilled 19 million gallons (70,000 tons) of Iranian light crude into the ocean after an explosion ripped open its hull and forced the crew to abandon the ship Dec. 19 about 645 kilometres north of Las Palmas. Greenpeace and other environmental organisations called on Spain to accept the tanker in its waters to avert the possibility of further contamination. A Portuguese navy patrol boat was in radio contact with the Khar 5 as it headed away from the island of Madeira.

Palestinians say travel ban dampens hopes for peace

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Israel has barred Faisal Husseini and other prominent Palestinians from travelling abroad in a tightening of restrictions on suspected leaders of the Palestinian uprising. Israel banned Husseini Thursday from foreign travel for three months, days after other prominent figures were stopped from going to Jordan, Palestinians said. "This is a wide campaign to prevent Palestinians from making their voices heard by the world," said Husseini, described by many Israelis as the most senior Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) figure in the occupied territories. San Nuseibeh, named in court

documents as a clandestine leader of the uprising in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, was turned back from the border Wednesday while on his way to Jordan. Nabulsi businessman Said Kanana and Shaker Sedo, head of the General Federation of Trade Unions in the West Bank, were stopped from going to Jordan Tuesday. Husseini, Nuseibeh and Kanana are considered central figures in any Palestinian delegation to negotiations with Israel. Four other trade union officials, also from Arab Jerusalem, were banned from travelling abroad for one month, Palestinian and Israeli sources said. The travel ban delivered to

Husseini's Arab Jerusalem home by secret service officers Thursday said Israel's "security" would be harmed if the Palestinian leader travelled abroad. The new curbs could hamper efforts to hold an Israeli-Palestinian meeting in Cairo to discuss elections in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Although no date had been set for the meeting, part of a U.S. proposal accepted conditionally by Egypt and Israel, State Department officials say progress had been made. Husseini said growing pressure on Israel to accept the PLO in negotiations had upset Israeli leaders. "It seems they feel the ground is shaking under their feet," he said.

Tibi urges Labour to quit Likud coalition government

KUWAIT (Agencies) — Ahmad Tibi, an Israeli-Arab physician who reportedly mediated between an Israeli cabinet member and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), says the Labour Party should withdraw from Israel's coalition government to give peace a chance, the newspaper Al Anbaa reported Friday. Tibi said in an interview no Arab-Israeli peace could be achieved as long as the partnership exists between the right-wing Likud bloc of Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir and Shimon Peres' Labour Party. "If the Labour Party quits the government there will be a real Israeli opposition in support of peace. The quest of peace will be the loser as long as Labour remains in the government," he said. "Shamir will not be able to resist the state of change that is taking the world by storm. When he discerns this, he will have two options: either to change his attitude or quit politics," Tibi added. Israeli Science Minister Ezer Weizman had contacted Tibi in Tunis to relay messages to the PLO leadership. The action sparked a government crisis in Israel last weekend

after Shamir announced he was sacking Weizman from the cabinet for contacting the PLO in violation of Israeli law. Labour threatened to withdraw from the coalition if Shamir did not reinstate Weizman. The crisis was settled when Shamir withdrew his dismissal order but excluded Weizman from the inner cabinet which drafts strategy. Tibi told Al Anbaa: "We are Palestinian citizens in Israel and thus we have a special role to play in pressuring the Israeli public opinion and politicians to accept the principle of negotiations with the PLO, the right of self-determination of the Palestinian people and the setting up of an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital." Tibi was interviewed in Amman, where he was on a private visit following the death of his uncle, Al Anbaa said. Egyptian and Israeli foreign ministers were expected to meet in Washington later this month to discuss a Palestinian-Israeli dialogue proposed by U.S. Secretary of State James Baker. Shamir has rejected PLO participation in the dialogue, and the PLO has insisted that it choose the team to the proposed meeting.

Tibi said: "There will be no delegation if it is not formed by the PLO from Palestinians inside and outside the (occupied) territories." He conceded having been in touch with Weizman. But he refused to say who took the initiative and deplored the reported monitoring of his telephone conversations with Weizman, at Shamir's instruction. "I am not astonished at Shamir's practices, but he should know that neither monitoring nor bugging will prevent sincere forces from completing their peace efforts," Tibi said. Palestinians say Shamir's attempt to show his opposition to talks with the PLO may have backfired and enhanced the group's status as a future peace partner. "What actually had happened is a step towards normalisation of relations between the PLO and Israel," Hanna Siniara, editor of the nationalist Palestinian Al Fajr newspaper, said. "Perhaps Shamir wanted to underline his strong opposition to talks with the PLO. But I would say the whole fiasco has opened the door for a future dialogue with the PLO," Siniara said.

Lively fireworks expected in Lower House debate on budget

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times staff writer
AMMAN — While most economists agree that the 1990 fiscal budget drafted by the government and scheduled to be explained to the Lower House of Parliament Saturday is the best under the circumstances, observers expect a lively House debate but with limited political intensity. "I will present the budget, and try to review the economic performance of the country in the past year and to make projections for 1990," said Finance Minister Basel Jaraneh, who drafted the budget and is scheduled to address the House Saturday. "We do not expect much" in the way of any major changes in the budget, said Jaraneh. "We (the government) believe that the draft budget is the best anybody could come up with under the circumstances," the minister told the Jordan Times in an interview Friday evening. At least two other leading economic analysts agree. "Considering everything, the budget fits in with Jordan's present economic situation," said Jawad Al Anani. "However, I doubt whether the government would be able to make good its projections of domestic revenues," he added. The budget forecasts a 17 per cent rise in domestic income to JD 694 million in 1990 compared with last year. The rise is most expected through already announced hikes in income tax, customs duties and postal and phone services. Fahed Fanek, also sounding a positive note, said he expected interesting debate on various stipulations of the budget, including subsidies,

wages of civil servants, imports and exports, stabilisation of the dinar's exchange rate, and floating of prices. "But, unlike last week's vote of confidence session, the debate would be much less in political intensity," he predicted. The JD 1.105 billion budget, with a forecast deficit of JD 199 million, is slightly higher than the Kingdom's 1989 budget, but proposes real spending reductions in dollar terms by 20 per cent and suspend public sector wage increases. Jaraneh has said the budget was compatible with the Kingdom's five-year economic structural adjustment programme agreed with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) last year. He also noted that the budget deficit was reduced to 16.5 per cent of the gross domestic product compared with 24 per cent in 1988 and 20.5 per cent in 1989 in line with the IMF stipulation that the Kingdom's budget deficit should be trimmed over the next five years. Most of the stipulations of the IMF agreement have been made public by the government. But some observers expected deputies to insist that the government explain all the terms of the agreement with the IMF. "This will be an exercise to assert the authority of the Lower House by demanding that the entire issue be put before the deputies and arrive at a decision based on 'what is good for the country and what is not'," said an observer. He was referring to calls made for cancelling the accord with the IMF by many left-leaning deputies during their election campaign. "But I do not think any such move is a possibility, since no-one can

come up with a entire economic package to suit the country." His Majesty King Hussein, in a post-election press conference, has reaffirmed that Jordan would remain solidly committed to its various agreements with Arab and foreign governments as well as other institutions and organisations. By law, Parliament is supposed to complete debate on fiscal budgets and approve them, after amendments if it finds the need for any, before Dec. 31. The 1990 budget was prepared by the government of Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker and presented to the House on Dec. 1, with enough time for deputies to debate it. However, the late formation of the government of Mudar Badran and the delayed vote of confidence session deferred the House debate on the issue, thus leaving a vacuum in government spending. The government, however, issued an order Jan. 1 ordering a monthly budget for January, equivalent to one-twelfth of the 1989 budget. The Lower House is supposed to complete debate on the 1990 draft budget and approve it after amendments if necessary in 15 days from Saturday. But, initial study would be conducted by the 20-member House financial committee which will make observations and suggest amendments before presenting it to the full House for open debate. Several members of the committee, which includes at least two known leftist deputies, declined specific comment when contacted by the Jordan Times Friday. "Let us hear what the minis-

ter has to say," commented one of them. Analyst Anani, noting that Prime Minister Badran had pledged that the government had already allocated JD 60 million as subsidies for basic food items, said he expected the issue to come up further during the debate. "For instance, the prime minister said the government was subsidising sugar, but what will be the situation if international prices for sugar go up? Will the government readjust its subsidy accordingly?" he asked. "I expect deputies to seek a pledge from the government to this effect," he said. Jordan's foreign debts, a subject which assumed centrality during the House debate on the government programme last week, are expected to be brought up again during the discussions on the budget. "Those deputies who think they did not get a chance to reply to the prime minister's speech at the end of the confidence vote session will use this chance to air their views once again," said Anani. However, over and above everything else, demands by deputies for government facilities and services as well as infrastructure like schools, hospitals, roads etc. etc. in their respective constituencies are expected to figure high during the discussions. "It is only natural that the deputies would like to tell their electorates that they are working hard and pressing the government to do something," said an analyst. "I guess, this could be the major focus of entire budget debate since it has political connotations in the context of voters."

At least 600 killed in clashes in central Sudan

KHARTOUM (R) — At least 600 people, including women and children, were killed in clashes last week between tribesmen and southerners in central Sudan, according to foreign diplomats and relief workers.

Sudanese rebels, reporting on the same clashes, said in a radio broadcast that local militia forces killed more than 2,000 people in the central Sudanese town of Al Gebel.

The diplomats said most of the victims were from southern Sudan. They belonged to the Nilotic Shilluk tribe which, together with the Nuer and Dinka tribes, are the main ethnic groups in southern Sudan.

The Shilluks live mainly in the southern Upper Nile region, whose northern border is about 50 kilometres south of Al Gebel where the killings last Thursday took place.

Al Gebel is 350 kilometres south of Khartoum in the White Nile province where many southerners have settled in recent years after escaping famine and fighting between troops and the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA).

A police statement broadcast Thursday on Omdurman state radio said a total of 186 people were killed in the clashes, which it said were sparked by an isolated incident.

Earlier, the clandestine radio of the SPLA, fighting in the south since 1983, said over 2,000 southerners were killed. It said the killings were carried out by militia recruited and armed by the government, which it accused of complicity.

The diplomats and relief officials, citing reports from the area, said the clashes were sparked when a southern Sudanese farm labourer killed his employer in a row over the length of Christmas

holiday his Christian colleagues were entitled to.

Several truckloads of armed tribesmen later went to a shanty town housing the workers and their families and began to set their shacks ablaze. Those who managed to escape the fires were gunned down by gunmen surrounding the area, they said.

The Sudanese police statement said army troops and policemen were sent to the area to restore order and several arrests were made.

A senior government official said in Khartoum Wednesday that peace talks between tribal leaders and southern elders had begun under the sponsorship of the local government.

The provinces of White Nile, Blue Nile, South Darfur and South Kordofan, stretching across Sudan from the Ethiopian border in the east to Chad in the west, have in recent years seen a series of massacres of southerners made refugees by the six-year-old civil war in their region.

Militias fighting the SPLA on behalf of the government are active in the four provinces and, according to diplomats, are responsible for the massacres.

The military government of General Omar Hassan Al Bashir, in power since he led a coup last June, says the inhabitants of those areas had no choice but to arm themselves in the face of repeated SPLA attacks.

Bashir recently said he planned to set up a paramilitary force of 150,000 men to aid the army against the SPLA, a move which diplomats saw as an attempt to

legitimise the militiamen in the four provinces.

Briton given time
A Sudanese court Thursday gave two British families until March 4 to decide the fate of five Palestinians sentenced to death for allegedly killing their relatives in bomb and machine-gun attacks in Khartoum in 1988.

Radio Omdurman said the families of two Sudanese victims of the attacks on a Khartoum hotel and club were also given until March to decide. It said the additional time was given at the request of defence lawyers.

The British Foreign Office said Tuesday the two British families had made their decisions which diplomats in Khartoum said had been delivered to the Sudanese embassy in London.

Five Britons, four of whom belonged to one family and included two small children, were killed in the attacks together with two Sudanese. Twenty-one people were injured.

Last September, a Sudanese court changed the death sentence on the five Palestinians to a section of the penal code based on Islamic laws under which the victims' families can insist the five be executed, pardoned or give blood money.

Both British families indicated at the time that they would not like the five to be hanged, but there was never any known word from the families of the two Sudanese victims.

The diplomats said the five Palestinians had been moved from Khartoum's Kobar prison and were being detained at a safe house in the Sudanese central region.

The chief defence lawyer for the Palestinians during their trial in 1988, Galal Lotfi, was appointed head of the judiciary in July.

Anti-tank missiles stolen in Cyprus surface in Greece

NICOSIA (AP) — The Cypriot government is considering launching an investigation to determine how four shoulder-fired anti-tank missiles stolen from an army camp in Cyprus turned up in Greece, according to government spokesman Akis Fantis.

The Athens daily Apogevmatini, reported Wednesday that the four LAW weapons, consisting of disposable launchers and missiles, reported stolen from a National Guard armoury in Cyprus two years ago were found hidden in bushes on a mountain in northern Greece in November.

The paper said the senior Greek army officers who formed the command of the Greek Cypriot force at the time the missiles were stolen had tried to cover up the theft.

"This is a shattering and particularly murky case centred on Nicosia and Athens involving senior army officers, police and civilians. It is considered certain the case is connected with terrorist activities," Apogevmatini reported.

It implied that the missiles may have been intended for an attack on the leader of Greece's right-

wing New Democracy Party. Constantine Mitsotakis who in November visited a village near where the weapons cache was discovered.

Amid calls by Greek Cypriot newspapers for a new investigation, Fantis told a daily press briefing Thursday that police who had investigated the theft were given army documents declaring that the four missiles had been fired during an exercise.

The documents were signed by the Greek army officer, General George Politis, then commanding the National Guard, and his deputy, Fantis said.

"Despite the existence of such a document the investigation was ordered to continue and it was revealed that the four missiles were never used during National Guard exercises," he added.

Fantis did not explain why no action has been taken against the officers for making a false declaration.

The 13,000-man National Guard has been commanded by regular Greek officers on secondment since the island's independence from Britain in 1960.

There is also a 3,000-strong Greek army contingent attached to the National Guard, which is exclusively Greek Cypriot.

The missiles found in Greece were among 10 reported stolen from the Cyprus military base in January 1988.

Fantis said soon after the investigation began "six of the missing missiles were mysteriously returned to the weapons store."

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DEFIANT MARCH: Masked Palestinians wearing Israeli army uniforms stage a march in the occupied West Bank to mark the anniversary of Fatah, the largest Palestinian faction

Sofia agrees to 'round table' talks amid protests against ethnic rights

SOFIA (Agencies) — Thousands of demonstrators marched past parliament Thursday protesting government ethnic policy, as the ruling Communist Party agreed to hold "round table" talks on Bulgaria's future with the democratic opposition Jan. 16-24, the BTA news agency said.

The protesters, mainly from the southern cities of Kardjali and Haskovo, threatened strikes in several cities Friday if the Communist government did not reverse a decision to restore minority rights to ethnic Turks in Bulgaria.

The protesters waved banners that read "Bulgaria for Bulgarians," and chanted against the government's new policy adopted Dec. 29, that allows Bulgarian Turks to use their Muslim names and reverses other discriminatory measures.

The demonstrators handed over a petition to parliament, demanding a national referendum on the question.

But BTA quoted spokesmen for the Communist Party and the democratic opposition as rejecting the demand on grounds that "the validity of human rights in Bulgaria cannot be submitted to any referendum."

Ivan Angelov, a prominent economist speaking for the Communists, said unidentified high-ranking officials met Thursday to discuss ethnic issues, BTA said. It gave no further details.

Angelov and opposition spokesman Georgi Spassov

spoke after the Communists, the opposition and other groups meeting in parliament reached agreement on round table talks after preliminary consultations that opened Wednesday and wound up Thursday.

The Jan. 16-24 session will discuss "problems of national agreement and reconciliation," the restructuring of the political, economic and legal systems and the draft of a new law permitting free elections, BTA said.

The Union of Democratic Forces — an umbrella organisation of opposition groups — demanded the right to publish its own daily newspaper, guaranteed broadcast time on Bulgarian state television and radio, and the use of a building for its work, BTA said.

The agency added that a decision would be made on the union's demands before the round table opens Jan. 16.

Each side will be represented by 14-member delegations, headed by parliament member Andrei Lukanov for the Communists and Svetla Daskalova for the Agrarian Party — the only other permitted party in Bulgaria since World War II, and activist Zhelya Zhelev for the opposition, BTA said.

Petar Mladenov, the Communist Party leader and president who took over from long-serving Todor Zhivkov Nov. 10, has promised free elections by May.

Turkey said Thursday that the demonstrations in Bulgaria

against the government move to restore rights to the ethnic Turkish minority were aimed at hurting Turkish-Bulgarian relations.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Murat Sungar said in a statement that the demonstrations were provocations against Bulgaria's stability as well as at the future of Turkish-Bulgarian relations.

The government's new policy allows members of the ethnic Turkish minority to use their original names instead of Muslim ones.

It also lets them to choose their religion and schools. Under the assimilation policy adopted under Zhivkov, ethnic Turks were forced to change their names.

The campaign prompted 320,000 ethnic Turks to emigrate to Turkey after Bulgarian government gave them passports last year.

More than 15,000 other ethnic Turks have arrived in this country after Turkey imposed a visa requirement Aug. 22 to slow down the flow. Official figures show nearly 100,000 ethnic Turks returned to Bulgaria after a short stay because of lack of housing and jobs.

Sungar said: "We believe the intended tensions will be overcome soonest with the resolute and circumspect attitude we hope will be taken by the new Bulgarian administration as well as with the maturity of Bulgarian people including ethnic Turks."

"We believe Bulgaria will

further its process of reform and democratisation in stability, leaving behind this evil legacy of the Zhivkov era," Sungar added.

The foreign ministers of Turkey and Bulgaria will meet in Kuwait Jan. 9 to discuss the ethnic Turkish issue.

The U.S. government Thursday applauded the Bulgarian move.

"The United States welcomes the decision by Bulgaria's new government to reverse the former regime's policy of forced assimilation carried out against ethnic Turks and its restrictions on the Pomaks minority," State Department spokesman Richard Boucher told reporters.

The new approach toward the ethnic Turkish and Pomak minorities in Bulgaria will also contribute to diminished regional tensions," Boucher said.

He noted that measures adopted Dec. 29 by the government promise to guarantee:

— The right to use Muslim names.

— Equal constitutional rights for all citizens.

— The right to practice religion according to each individual's conscience.

— Free use of languages other than Bulgarian.

"This represents a significant step forward in Bulgaria's respect for human rights, and in honouring its commitments under the conference for security and cooperation in Europe agreements," Boucher said.

Noriega adviser gone to ground in Israel

TEL AVIV (R) — Israeli security sources have said that Mike Harari, a former Israeli intelligence officer and adviser to ousted Panamanian leader Manuel Antonio Noriega, had gone to ground in Israel.

Harari, 62, initially reported captured when U.S. armed forces intervened in Panama to overthrow Noriega last month, had been in the country for several days, they said.

The sources said Harari was not receiving protection from the Israeli secret services and did not need it.

"Mike is a professional through and through. He knows how to avoid attention," one source said. A foreign ministry spokesman

said Harari was a private citizen and the ministry had no knowledge of his whereabouts.

The commander of the invasion, Lieutenant-General Carl Stiner, said on Wednesday in Panama City that Harari, believed to have recruited and trained Noriega's bodyguards, escaped U.S. forces hunting for him and fled to Israel.

The head of Panama's new security force, Lieutenant-Colonel Eduardo Herrera, told Reuters that two unidentified Israelis had tipped off Harari about the U.S. invasion six hours before American troops landed.

"He's in Israel. That is all I can say for certain. He has been in the country for four or five days,"

an Israeli security source told Reuters.

Another source familiar with Harari said the former Mossad agent, who quit Israeli intelligence in 1979 after his men killed an innocent Arab in Norway in a bungled operation, had distanced himself somewhat from Noriega in the last year.

However the head of Panama's new security force said Harari was with Noriega's wife on the night before the U.S. action.

The foreign ministry spokesman declined comment on suggestions by a Panamanian business associate that the Israeli embassy helped Harari to flee. The sources said Harari, who

escorted Noriega on an official visit to Israel in the early 1980s, was a useful go-between for Israel in Panama until his role became embarrassing when the United States sought to oust Noriega for alleged drug dealing.

According to published accounts, Harari headed a Mossad unit ordered by the late Prime Minister Golda Meir to avenge a 1972 killing of Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympic Games by assassinating the Palestinians who allegedly planned it.

The unit killed several Palestinians before the 1979 incident in which a waiter in a restaurant in Lillehammer, Norway, was shot dead by mistake.

Rabbi suggests joint Arab president for Israel

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — An Israeli rabbi living in the occupied West Bank suggested Friday that an Arab president should be elected to serve alongside Israel's Jewish head of state.

Rabbi Menachem Froman said it would be immoral and impractical to partition the "Biblical land of Israel," including the occupied territories.

"We must look for another solution," Froman, who is affiliated with the Gush Emunim settlement group but criticised by Jewish nationalists for his radical views, told Reuters.

"We have a right to the land. The Arabs have a right to the land. Who said these two rights contradict each other?"

"For the love of land and the love man, the two peoples must live together. The political plan for this will be quite detailed, but the first stage I propose the election of an Arab president alongside the Jewish president," Froman said.

He said that in principle Israeli Arabs should vote for the Arab president along with the 1.75 million Palestinians under Israeli occupation, but the matter would have to be examined on a legal basis.

Froman, who said he was speaking only for himself, has been sharply criticised by members of his Jewish settlement of Tekoa and by Gush Emunim for his political views and for meeting Palestinian nationalist Faisal Husseini, a known Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) supporter.

He put forward his proposal for a Palestinian co-president at a convention of Jewish Students in Jerusalem Thursday.

Defence Minister Yitzhak Rabin told the meeting that Israel could not rule over 1.6 million Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip indefinitely. Israel distinguishes between the occupied territories and Arab Jerusalem.

Rabin said peace with the Palestinians would lead to peace with neighbouring Arab states.

Froman told Reuters he first proposed a bi-national state several years ago and had discussed it with Gush Emunim leaders. The idea of a Jewish-Arab state has traditionally been promoted only by a minority of Israeli leftists.

"A nation is primarily defined by its culture. The Jewish people should not stress the state as the main expression of the nation," Froman said. "There can be two states on one territory."

He said the two-year-old Palestinian uprising had given a new incentive to search for political solutions.

"Peace caravan"

Israeli organisers are trying to form what they call a peace caravan of 1,000 Israelis to meet Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat in Egypt.

Victor Blit, an Israeli kibbutz collective farmer, said Arafat had agreed to meet the Israelis who want to challenge a policy which brands him a terrorist.

Blit said Thursday 150 people had joined in the three days since his group began collecting signatures along with a money deposit for the bus trip which he hopes will take place in February.

"We received messages from Arafat through several channels that he is ready to meet us," Blit, 45, told Reuters.

"We believe the demonisation of Arafat and the PLO is part of the policy that prevents the advancement of peace," he said.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 77311-19

PROGRAMME ONE

15:30 Korean
15:40 Programme review
15:45 Children programme
15:50 Educational programme
16:00 News summary
16:05 Message from Iraq
16:10 A play by Shakespeare
16:15 Local programme
16:20 News in Arabic
16:25 Arabic series
16:30 Annie McGillicuddy
16:35 Consumer's Guide
16:40 News in Arabic
16:45 News in Arabic

PROGRAMME TWO

17:30 Variety programme
17:40 News in French
17:45 Documentary
17:50 News in Hebrew
17:55 Natural Phenomena
18:00 News in Arabic
18:05 Annie McGillicuddy
18:10 Local programme
18:15 Classical music
18:20 News in English
18:25 Feature film

PRAYER TIMES

06:00 Fajr
06:31 (Sunrise) Duha
11:38 Dhuhur

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church, Switkh, Tel. 810740

Assistance of God Church, Tel. 632785

St. Joseph Church, Tel. 624590

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440

De la Salle Church, Tel. 661757

Terrace Church, Tel. 622366

Church of the Assumption Tel. 623541

Anglican Church, Tel. 625383, Tel. 628543

Armenian Catholic Church, Tel. 771331

Armenian Orthodox Church, Tel. 77261

St. Ephraim Church, Tel. 771751

Armenian International Church, Tel. 685326

Swedish Lutheran Church, Tel. 811295

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Tel. 815817, 649592

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology

It will be cold and partly cloudy to cloudy and rainfall is expected to de-

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMBULANCE: Dr. Mohamed Al Abadi 778939

Dr. Saeed Abu Hatab 649846

Dr. Nabil Al Mohtaseb 828252

Dr. David Al Samsouni 689535

Ferns pharmacy 661912

Ferns pharmacy 778336

Al Asma pharmacy 637055

Nairweh pharmacy 625672

Al Salam pharmacy 636730

Yacoub pharmacy 644945

Shmeisani pharmacy 637660

REPAIRS: Dr. Ibrahim Al Rabadi (—)

Dr. Al Samsouni (985238)

ZARQA: Dr. Randa Shaban (—)

Khalid pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES: Civil Defence Department 661111

Civil Defence Emergency 630341

Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777

Fire Brigade 891228

Blood Bank 775121

Highway Police 843482

Traffic Police 896390

Public Security Department 630321

Hotel Complaints 655800

Price Complaints 661176

Water and Sewerage 897467

Complaints 787111

Complaints 787111

Telephone Information 121

Overseas Calls 010230

Central Amman Telephone

HOSPITALS

AMMAN: Hussein Medical Centre 813613/32

Khalid Maternity, J. Amn 642251/6

Abdullah Maternity, J. Amn 642412

Jabal Amman Maternity 642362

Malles, J. Amman 636140

Palestine, Shmeisani 664171/4

Shmeisani Hospital 669131

University Hospital 845848

Al-Musharraf Hospital 667227/9

The Islamic, Abdali 666127/37

Al-Ahli, Abdali 664164/6

Indiana, Al-Mohajreen 771012/3

Al-Bashir, J. Amman 775111/26

Army, Marfa 891611/15

Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50

Amal Hospital 674155

ZARQA: Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) Information Department at the Queen Alia International Airport. Tel. (06)3220-5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

06:45 Singapore, Kuala Lumpur (RJ)

Cement factory dispute settled

AMMAN (J.T.) — A dispute at the Jordan Cement Factory Company (JCFC) between employees and the management has been settled following face-to-face negotiations Thursday.

A report by the Jordan News Agency, Petra, quoted Abdul Razzaq Saeed, president of the Construction Workers Union, as saying the company manager has responded to the demands workers at Rashtadieh in southern Jordan, and that a satisfactory agreement was concluded between the two sides.

Details of the agreement, he said, will be published in the local press after it has been endorsed by the company's board of directors.

The company operates two cement mines, one at Rashtadieh and the other at Fubels near Amman.

Saeed said arrangements have been made for the Fubels workers to join the Jordanian Construction Workers Union.

Workers to rejoin union

In another development, agreement was reached Thursday for workers to rejoin the Electricity Workers Union after an unspecified period. The agreement was reached at a meeting attended by Minister of Labour Qassem Obeidat and Samir Garden, the union's president as well as representative of the dismissed workers. Petra said that the decision will have to be approved by the union's general assembly.

Premier pledges to cooperate with houses

AMMAN (J.T.) — The government is determined to maintain full cooperation with Parliament in order to carry out the directives of His Majesty King Hussein and serve the nation, Prime Minister Mudar Badran said Thursday.

Badran was speaking at the beginning of an Upper House of Parliament (Senate) session during which Senate members elected a five-member committee to represent the Senate at meetings by parliamentarians from countries of the Arab Cooperation Council (ACC) — Egypt, North Yemen, Iraq and Jordan.

The committee comprises Saeed Tal, Mohammad Rasoul Al Keilani, Amin Shuqair, Ishaq Al Farhan and Hamad Al Farhan.

Several procedural issues were discussed at the session, which was chaired by Senate Speaker Ahmad Al Lawzi and attended by Cabinet members.

Badran meets tribes

During a meeting Thursday

with delegations representing the tribes of Al Zyud and Da'ja as well as those of North Ghor and Al Hoson Camp, Badran asked the delegations to convey his greetings and love for his brother citizens. The delegations conveyed congratulations to Badran on getting royal confidence and parliamentary vote of confidence.

The heads of the delegations expressed pride in the government's sound policies and appreciation for its desire to ensure success for the democratic march.



A WELCOME HAZARD: For motorists the two days of rains that hit Jordan posed traffic hazards, but the drench was a boon for the Kingdom's agricultural sector (photo by Youssef Al 'Alban)

Weather department predicts more cloudy, rainy weather

AMMAN (J.T.) — Rain fell in most parts of Jordan over the past three days and the Department of Meteorology predicts more cloudy and rainy weather for Friday and Saturday.

A department official contacted by the Jordan Times Friday morning said that a cold front accompanying a depression centered over northern Syria continues to affect Jordan resulting in more cold air and rains especially in the northern and central parts of the country.

The official said that Baqoura district in the north received a

total of 193 millimetres of rain until Friday morning. But amounts of rainfall towards the south dwindled, with some regions receiving as little as one millimetre.

The semi-desert region of Al Jafer received no rain at all. According to the official, there will be a slight improvement in weather conditions Saturday before the Kingdom will be affected by a new depression Sunday and Monday which will bring more rains and lower temperatures.

Low-lying regions in Amman and other parts of the country

were flooded and in some streets, pools of water caused traffic difficulties. The Civil Defence Department (CDD) urged residents of low-lying areas to move to higher ground for safety.

Department of Meteorology reported that rainfall Thursday ranged between a maximum of 95 millimetres in Salt and a minimum of 1.1 millimetres in Marraq. Regions with relatively high rainfall included Ajloun with 59 mm, King Talal Dam with 58 mm, Fuhais with 83 mm, Wadi Al Seir with 48.2, and Sweileh with 44 mm.



HM King Hussein

King urges more serious peace efforts

AMMAN (J.T.) — U.S. Defence Under-Secretary Paul Wolfowitz met with His Majesty King Hussein and Prime Minister Mudar Badran Thursday during what he described as an orientation trip to the Middle East.

Wolfowitz, who heads the Pentagon's office of policy, said he came to Amman to listen to King Hussein's opinions on the Middle East problem and efforts to reach a peaceful solution.

At the meeting attended by Chief of the Royal Court Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker and Army Chief of Staff Fathi Abu Taleb, King

Hussein stressed the need for more serious efforts to find a just Middle East settlement through an international peace conference, according to the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

Petra said the King referred to the Iran-Iraq conflict by pointing out the danger inherent in the present no-peace no-war situation in the Gulf. He urged the U.S. government to help establish permanent peace in the Gulf region.

Wolfowitz's Middle East tour includes stops in Egypt and Israel.

ACC news agencies to issue unified bulletins

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein expressed support for an agreement among the national news agencies of the four-nation Arab Cooperation Council (ACC) to issue a unified news bulletin. He expressed hope that the four countries would establish a unified news agency to serve the goals of pan-Arab unity.

In a statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, released Friday morning, King Hussein said the four countries — Jordan, Egypt, Iraq and North Yemen — embarked on a very constructive project of creating the ACC at a meeting in Baghdad last February and the "pooling of resources through national news agencies will undoubtedly contribute to

wards the fulfilment of the aspirations and goals of this union."

News agencies directors in the ACC countries met in Cairo last month and decided to issue a unified bulletin starting in 1990. The bulletin will feature the most important socio-economic, political and sports events in the four countries. Petra was given the task of collecting the news bulletins from the four states before broadcasting them again in two daily bulletins on a daily basis. Petra began this service Jan. 1, 1990 in implementation of the Cairo agreement.

"In less than one year since the creation of the ACC, the national news agencies started fruitful and constructive cooperation reflecting the great importance of in-

formation and media services in cementing cultural, political and social unity among the four countries and contributing towards the aspired Arab unity," King Hussein said in his statement to Petra.

"By uniting, the news agencies can better report on various matters and draw attention to various problems and challenges confronting the Arab World," the King said.

By issuing unified daily bulletins, the news agencies of the four countries have thus taken a sound step which could be imitated ACC's radio and television services, he said.

King Hussein sent his greetings to all employees of the four news agencies and wished them success in their endeavours.

NMI offers facilities to improve services

AMMAN (Petra) — National Medical Institution (NMI) Director-General Abdul Salam Al Majali Thursday visited the Farah Rehabilitation Centre at the King Hussein Medical Centre and discussed with doctors and officials several issues related to the training of doctors and improving services.

Majali said at a meeting with the staff that NMI would place all its services and facilities at the disposal of the faculties of nursing, pharmacy and medicine in Jordanian universities to help im-

prove the training of Jordanian doctors and nurses and offer better services at hospitals.

Matters related to regulations at hospitals, ensuring medical treatment to various public sectors and coordination among various hospitals operated by the NMI were discussed at the meeting.

NMI Deputy-Director Na'el Ajlouni outlined NMI's plans and Majali heard reports on the hospital's services and answered questions on various matters related to hospital work.



Hosni Fariz

Fariz laid to rest

SALT (J.T.) — The late Hosni Fariz, a well-known Jordanian writer and poet who died in Amman at the age of 83 was buried in his hometown of Salt Friday.

Born in Salt in 1907, Fariz studied at local schools and later at the American University of Beirut after which he worked as a teacher at schools in Salt, Amman and Karak. Fariz had served as under-secretary of the Ministry of Education, adviser at the Ministry of Information and president of the Jordanian Writers Federation. He wrote more than 30 books and a collection of poems, and was very active in literary circles. He was honoured by a state award granted by His Majesty King Hussein in November.

Madaba 1989 projects cost JD 650,800

MADABA (Petra) — Madaba Mayor Mohammad Abu Kaff said the Municipality of Madaba carried out several projects in 1989 costing JD 650,800.

During an open session of Madaba Municipal Council held Thursday with residents of Madaba, Abu Kaff said the public library was recently supplied with a large variety of books and periodicals. He said there were plans to improve services, promote administrative and health systems and create a 170-dunum public park.

Lower House of Parliament member and former Madaba

Mayor Ahmad Otaish, who attended the meeting with other parliamentary members, said the municipality debts amounting to JD 1.5 million were spent on "service and productive projects that would provide regular financial income for the municipality."

Parliament member Dr. Saeed Haddadin said requests to improve medical services in Madaba district were raised during parliamentary debates. Parliament member Abdul Hafiz Alawi criticized showing of plays with depicted values and morals not consistent with Jordanian society.

NATIONAL NEWS IN BRIEF

LEGAL COMMITTEE TO MEET: The Lower House of Parliament legal committee will hold a meeting Monday morning to look into the following laws: 1. Temporary law number 41 of 1989 related to cancellation of Amman Development Corporation law. 2. Temporary law number 42 of 1989 related to amendment of flats property law. 3. Temporary law number 10 of 1989 related to amendment of foreigners' residence and affairs law. 4. Temporary law number 26 of 1988 related to cancellation of the occupied territories affairs law (Petra).

ARAB, INTERNATIONAL GROUPS SEMINAR: Jordan take part in a seminar on the role of Arab and international organisations in promoting the private sector activities which will open in Cairo Saturday. Dr. Burhan Al Dajani, secretary general of the Federation of Arab Agricultural, Commercial and Industrial Chambers of Commerce, said the three-day seminar will focus attention on the role of businessmen in the private sector or promote the national economies, and the facilities which various governments and organisations can offer towards this goal. He said representatives of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) and the United Nations development fund will be among the various organisations to take part in the meeting (Petra).

SAFETY INSPECTIONS: The joint public safety committee in Balqa Governorate Thursday undertook an inspection tour of a number of commercial stores, companies, factories, and residential quarters in Salt so as to closely follow up the city's health, cleanliness, and public safety conditions. The committee includes members from the Municipality of Salt.

THEATRE FESTIVAL: The Ministry of Culture will participate in the 10-day Baghdad Theatre Festival due to begin in the Iraqi capital Jan. 15 (Petra).

IRAQI-JORDANIAN COMPANY: The 23rd session of the Iraqi-Jordanian Land-Transport Company will begin in Baghdad Sunday. The two-day meetings will deal with a number of reports related to future plans and budget for 1990 (Petra).

JWA ELECTS PRESIDENT: Yarmouk University President Dr. Ali Mahafiz has been elected president of the Jordan Writers' Association (JWA). During the annual meeting Thursday, the JWA general assembly elected the president and members to the JWA; the following were elected as members of the board of directors: Hani Khair, Ziaduddin Rifai, Isam Ammari, Yehya Jaber, Sulaiman Mashini, Dr. Ali Shomali, Dr. Samir Qatani, and Ali Batri. The following were also elected as members of the membership committee: Rashid Isa, Mohammad Jma'an, Mustafa Farr, Ujla Haddad, Mohammad Abu Soufa, and Hilmi Abdul Hadi. The new board of directors held its first meeting with Dr. Samir Qatani holding the post of vice president, Dr. Ali Shomali as secretary general, and Isam Ammari as secretary for financial affairs (Petra).

WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

EXHIBITION

- ★ An art exhibition by artists from Jordan and other Arab countries at Al Wasil Gallery, Plaza Hotel.
- ★ An exhibition entitled "They chose 30 poets" at the French Cultural Centre.
- ★ An art exhibition by Irish artist Conal McIntyre at the British Council.

FILMS

- ★ A Czech film entitled "The Edisons" at the Royal Cultural Centre — 8:00 p.m.
- ★ A collection of video films on design and plastic arts at the French Cultural centre (show upon request).

Iraqi leader offers plan

(Continued from page 1)

our willingness for peace," that the two countries' national airlines, Iran Air and Iraqi Airways, be allowed to open offices in the rival capitals and operate from civilian airports to arrange the exchange of visits, especially to holy Islamic sites.

He said such a move would "secure an atmosphere of peace and comfort among the people of Iran and Iraq."

Turning to his country's drive to build an advanced arms industry, Hussein lashed out at the United States for expressing concern over Iraq's construction of new missiles, while maintaining silence over Israel's nuclear capability.

Iraq announced on Dec. 8 that it had launched a 48-ton, three-stage rocket capable of putting a satellite in space, and had tested two surface-to-surface missiles with a range of 2,000 kilometres.

Washington confirmed the launch of the missiles, which can hit Israel.

Israeli leaders contend that Iraq's missile drive, combined with its arsenal of other weapons and reported efforts to develop nuclear weapons, pose a serious danger to the Zionist state.

In 1981, the Israelis, saying Iraq was developing a military

nuclear potential at French-built reactor near Baghdad, knocked it out in a long-range air raid.

Hussein said Iraq will "retaliate firmly and with precision to any attempt by the Zionist entity to strike at Iraq's scientific or military installations."

"If Israel undertakes any aggression, the United States will not be able to absolve itself from the responsibility of encouraging such an act," he said.

Hussein also said his government would concentrate this year on domestic issues and would draft a new constitution offering greater democracy and press freedom and the formation of political parties.

In Tunis, the Arab League welcomed the Iraqi president's proposals and said it hoped Iran would reciprocate.

"The peace plan announced by President Saddam Hussein... could make a substantial contribution to bringing about peace between Iraq and Iran and between Iraq and its neighbours in the area," Arab League Secretary General Chadi Kibihi said in a statement.

"We hope the new Iraqi peace proposals will meet with a (positive) response from the Iranian leadership and that this will open a new page in relations," he added.

Special furniture helps Jordan's special kids

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Cerebral Palsy Foundation Centre in Amman bustles with activity. Parents and children sit together at a long table, hammering and moving puzzle pieces. Down the hall physical therapists play with the children, pulling and pushing small twisted limbs. Some children are crying. Your heart is breaking until five-year old Mohammad shows you he can walk. Smiling over his shoulder because he still must grip the wooden walker, he makes it clear that without the tears, work, devotion and encouragement of all those present at the centre, Mohammad might never have walked.

Farid Ashab is among the many extraordinary individuals who contribute to the centre. He is a carpenter. He and his family, who own Holy Land Carpentry in Ras Al Ein, build the specialised furniture used by the cerebral palsy children — chairs, tables, benches, exercise ladders, walkers. "If it's wood," Ashab says proudly, "We built it."

Ashab visited the centre for the first time three years ago when he brought his son to see Dr. Samira Baban, director of the centre. Although his son was not diagnosed with cerebral palsy, Ashab returns to the centre twice a month. He devotes 10 per cent of his time, non-profit, to making specialised furniture for the Cerebral Palsy Foundation and the multi-handicapped centre. In addition, Ashab's special contributions — sympathy for the children and ingenious craftsmanship — are gifts without price.

Baban and Ashab work together in designing the therapeutic equipment. She is familiar with the imported models and, as a medical expert, understands why a chair is built just so. Baban provides Ashab with the initial drawings and specifications but he often returns with useful suggestions. For instance, the long play table around which the children make music is cut so that the special high-backed chairs which support the children can be wheeled into place. The table is just the right height and there is space for the parent to sit and play with the children. According to Ashab, he thought about this design for a week. After talking with Baban, he devised a way to position the table legs so they would be stable but not interfere with the children's chairs. The design also used



A child plays on one of many apparatus which build muscles of cerebral palsied children

less wood than its European forerunner. Ashab can build furnishings for the centre out of the most durable hardwood for one-fourth the cost of imported furniture.

The General Union of Voluntary Societies (GUVS), and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) assisted the Cerebral Palsy Foundation in providing several kinds of homecare equipment which was built by Holy Land Carpentry and distributed according to need. Ashab built seventy mobile high-backed chairs with play tables and potties for families coming to the centre. Working with an upholsterer, he also provided the centre with over 400 exercise pillows for use at the centre and at home. These are specially shaped rolls and wedges essential for developing the muscles most commonly crippled by cerebral palsy. The chairs and pillows are tools that permit parents to continue the exercises their children are benefiting from at the centre at home.

According to Baban, proper homecare is a key, along with early diagnoses, to the successful rehabilitation of disabled children. She points out, "If

we teach the child a certain movement, it must be repeated at home or the child forgets. If we position the child in the chair in a way that encourages normal posture, it must be re-enforced at home. It is daily attention to the needs of the child, usually through the mother, which keeps the child from reverting." One mother described how, when her son is watching television, she turns his chair slightly so that he works the stricken muscles in order to watch his favourite shows. The centre's staff have shown her this simple technique.

According to representative of GUVS, seventy per cent of the services for the handicapped are donated through Jordanian voluntary organisations and international donors. Those funds together with the dedicated efforts of men and women like Ashab are helping to improve the care available for Jordan's special children. Baban, appreciates his skills. "If more craftsmen, like Farid, get interested in helping the disabled, a day will come when Jordan will import only the most specialised equipment for her disabled children."



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L'Orient dans la musique classique occidentale

XIXe: sur le chemin des sources

Avec le romantisme, qui caractérise la musique occidentale au XIXe siècle, l'orientalisme européen prend peu à peu le chemin des sources. Le compositeur allemand Schumann s'inspire d'une légende persane islamisée dans l'une de ses œuvres. En

France, Frédéric David puis Saint-Saëns s'en vont à la découverte des «colonies». Ils en rapportent les transcriptions de thèmes et de chansons entendues en Egypte, en Algérie... dont ne s'inspirent pourtant que timidement leurs contemporains et successeurs.

Le romantisme a d'abord pris à l'Orient son passé de légendes. C'est une «romance orientale» écrite en 1817 par Thomas Moore, «Lallah Rookh», qui inspira Schumann, et enfin Paul Dukas.

C'est après avoir mis en musique des poèmes de Goethe, extraits du recueil oriental «Le Divan», que Robert Schumann songe à écrire un oratorio entier dans le décor exotique de la Perse antique. Il s'agit d'un personnage mythique des Perses, décrié par Moore comme des fées maléfiques, transformés par l'islam en fées proches des êtres humains.

Voici l'histoire mise en musique par Schumann: une Péri est chassée du Paradis, car elle doit épouser une fille — qui devient incertaine — en faisant un don incalculable à Allah.

Dans son premier voyage sur terre, elle aperçoit toutes les richesses de l'Orient: jamais elle ne souffrira à épouser la colère divine... Elle se rend alors sur un champ de bataille: elle y recueille le sang d'un jeune héros baigné mortellement en attendant sa patrie. Mais un choc céleste apprend à la Péri que son oratoire est encore insuffisant.

Son second voyage sur terre l'emmène dans la chambre d'une jeune mourante: elle a surpris la peste en soignant son fiancé assassiné par la terrible maladie. Recouvrant le dernier soupir de cette jeune fille, la Péri en fait don au Ciel. En vain...

Enfin, la Péri recouvre un pécheur repentant. Elle lui demande ses larmes pour les offrir à Allah: les cieux s'ouvrent, un choeur triomphal s'épand. Seuls les pleurs de l'homme revenant à lui peuvent attendre Allah, et servir de tribut à la Péri.

L'histoire issue de cette légende sur la rédemption a sans doute inspiré Schumann autant que l'atmosphère de féerie persane dans laquelle elle se déroule. Mais le compositeur a cher-

ché des influences musicales orientales pour «Le Paradis et la Péri»: cette innovation stylistique coïncide à son oratorio le succès immédiat: il fut joué par les contemporains.

Schumann pensait que la musique orientale se déroulait dans un temps beaucoup plus récent que celui de la musique occidentale. Ses choeurs sont donc empreints, basés sur des motifs musicaux orientaux. Le chant de la Péri, lui aussi, s'inspire en large mesure. Schumann a transcrit en musique ce qu'il connaissait des déclarations de musiciens perses dans le livre de Thomas Moore: les motifs d'arabesques.

Il donne à son orchestre une couleur particulière, chatoyante, pour évoquer les merveilles de l'Orient. Dans les seconds tableaux, les harpes jouent une mélodie mélancolique, sous des accords pittoresques.

L'attitude de Schumann envers la source d'inspiration orientale est en évolution par rapport à la première génération des romantiques. Ces derniers, Beethoven en tête, (écouter le «Marche turque» sur les ruines d'Athènes), étaient encore tributaires du style facile des «mugures» exploités par le XVIIIe siècle. Pour autant, Schumann n'a pas entrepris une recherche rigoureuse sur les principes d'une quelconque musique orientale. Son œuvre se veut une mixture d'ambiances, repoussée de ces contrées où aucun musicien romantique allemand ne voyageait jamais.

Le seul prédecesseur de Schumann qui ait eu le même projet était Carl Maria von Weber. Ce dernier a évoqué le Proche-Orient dans une œuvre originale: son «Kometenritzt» pour piano et orchestre. C'est une œuvre purement instrumentale, sans trace, elle n'a été écrite qu'après le retour des Croisés avec leurs prisonniers musulmans. Voyage à la fois dramatique et triomphal, parcouru de souvenirs des pays

reconnus. En s'intéressant à des faits historiques ou légendaires orientaux, les romantiques approfondissent leur rapport à un patrimoine artistique jusque là étranger. Outre ses bédouins d'après Goethe (dont les textes seront repris à la fin du siècle par Hugo Wolf), Schumann retrouvera l'Orient une ultime fois dans ses «Images d'Orient» pour piano à quatre mains.

La colonisation par la France de certains pays du Proche-Orient et de l'Afrique du Nord, explique certainement la particularité de l'orientalisme musical français: la facilité des voyages permet à quelques compositeurs de s'aventurer à noter des thèmes entendus sur place, et à les transcrire dans leurs œuvres. Bien sûr, ce souci d'authenticité a donné lieu à une mode exotique, arabesque, qui se reflète dans les romances chantées dans les salons bourgeois (voir «Médjé», «chanson arabe» de Charles Gounod). Mais des jalons de connaissance objective sont posés, les premiers du genre envers une tradition en tous points différente.

L'initiateur fut, dans ce domaine, le compositeur Frédéric David, un peu oublié de nos jours. C'était un saint-simonien, fervent disciple de Pierre Etienne. Lorsque le cercle de pensée de ce dernier fut interdit par le roi Louis-Philippe, Frédéric David se fit nommer missionnaire en Egypte. Il resta deux ans au Caire, de 1833 à 1835. Là, son talent de musicien reprit le dessus: il note des thèmes de chansons entendues dans les cafés et les rues de la ville, et en simplifie les contours afin de les transcrire dans la notation occidentale.

Cette transcription ne peut être qu'approximative: la tonalité européenne fut les intervalles non tempérés (différents ou plus petits que le demi-ton). D'autre part, les techniques vocales de la France du XIXe

siècle n'ont pas la liberté des chants improvisés par des voix égyptiennes... Enfin, le piano ne peut prétendre donner un équivalent des timbres usités par les virtuoses orientaux.

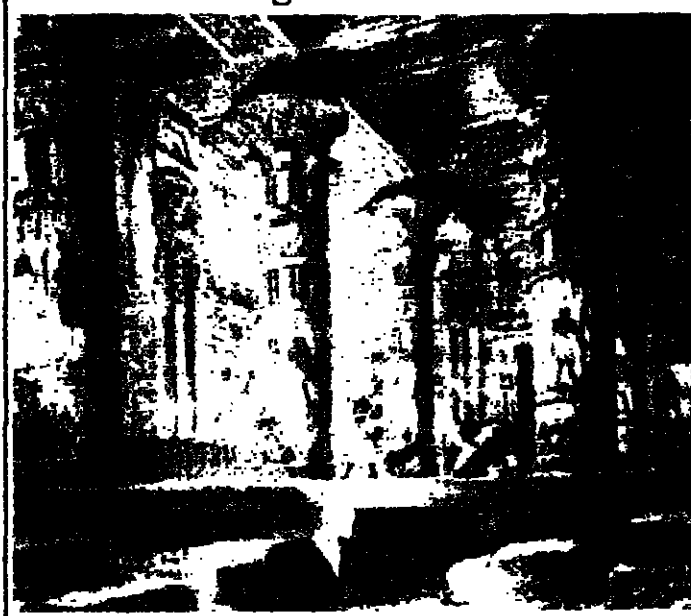
Pourtant, malgré tous ces obstacles à la compréhension d'une autre tradition, la tentative de Frédéric David mérite d'être reconnue comme le point de départ d'une nouvelle attitude. Ses œuvres, «Lallah Rookh» (d'après Moore), «Le Dénouement», «Mise au Silence», ont inspiré l'orientalisme de Berlioz (description du Désert de Judée dans «L'Enfance du Christ»), et de Massenet dans l'opéra «Thaïs».

Camille Saint-Saëns a effectué, lui, de nombreux séjours en Afrique du Nord et au Proche-Orient. Il en rapporte des thèmes notés: on peut qualifier sa démarche, souvent appuyée jusqu'au systématisme, d'«ethnomusicologique». Il utilise son matériel dans sa «Suite Algérienne» de 1880, «Africa» (1891), son «Concerto pour piano sur des thèmes égyptiens», et dans son grand opéra «Samson et Dalila».

En effectuant cette recherche, Saint-Saëns espérait renouveler son langage, et élargir par des modes nouveaux le système musical occidental. Il est le seul compositeur de la fin du XIXe siècle qui se soit tourné vers les musiques arabes pour renouveler sa technique. Plus tard, lorsque Debussy, Roussel ou Messiaen songeront à d'autres horizons musicaux, ils regarderont vers Bali, l'Inde, le Japon... La musique française savante se fermait ainsi durablement à la tradition arabe. A moins que, comme dans le chef-d'œuvre de Ravel, «Shéhérazade», elle ne se contente de recréer un Orient imaginaire sans support authentique.

Jean-Christophe Marti.

Aida de Verdi Les contingences de la culture



Maquette pour Aida (1901).

La création mouvementée d'Aida de Verdi, en 1871, est une bonne illustration du rapport culturel entre les vies musicales orientales et occidentales: conditionnée par les contingences politiques, et esthétiquement imprécise.

On commande l'opéra à Verdi pour le nouveau Théâtre Italien (sic) du Caire, et pour célébrer du même coup l'ouverture du Canal de Suez. L'action se situe dans l'Egypte des Pharaons, Verdi commande à l'égyptologue français Mariette de concevoir les décors et costumes, par souci d'authenticité.

La première devait avoir lieu en janvier 1871. Mais on décide de fabriquer les décors à Paris: le siège de la capitale par les Allemands empêche Mariette, les peintres et tous les accessoires d'arriver à temps au Caire.

Finalement, «Aida» fut jouée à

la veille de Noël 1871, devant un public venant des quatre coins... de l'Europe!

Contrairement à une idée reçue, Verdi ne fut nullement la part belle, dans sa musique, à la reconstitution de Mariette. Il préféra mettre l'accent sur l'intrigue amoureuse du livret, ce qui en fait un de ses opéras les plus intimistes! Ce malentendu perdure encore de nos jours, où «Aida», à cause peut-être de sa fameuse fanfare, est regardée comme une œuvre à grand spectacle.

Quant à l'orientalisme de la musique, il se limite à quelques recettes mélodiques et orchestrales que Verdi n'a pas inventé lui-même, comme on peut l'entendre dans le choeur des Prêtres qui commence le deuxième acte.

J.-C. M.

EN BREF

Loi martiale. Le premier ministre jordanien a annoncé lundi soir devant le Parlement l'abrogation prochaine de la loi martiale en vigueur dans le royaume depuis 1967. Moudar Badrane, qui avait déjà proclamé le «gel» des lois d'exception le 19 décembre, a déclaré aux députés qu'elles seront supprimées dans «quatre à six mois au maximum».

Opinion. Une majorité d'Israéliens se déclare favorable à des négociations entre l'Etat hébreu et l'O.L.P., selon un sondage publié mercredi par le quotidien populaire de Jérusalem «Hadsah». A la question: «Devons-nous en fin de compte négocier avec l'O.L.P.», 50% des personnes interrogées ont répondu par l'affirmative, 37% par la négative, 12% sont restées indécises.

Accrochage. Une patrouille de l'armée israélienne a ouvert le feu jeudi matin contre deux hommes, qui tentaient de franchir le Jourdain d'Est en Ouest et de s'insérer dans les territoires occupés. L'un des deux individus, qui ont pris la fuite, aurait été blessé. En 1989, huit incidents armés ont été signalés à la frontière et sur la ligne de cessez-le-feu israélo-jordanienne.

Municipales. Des élections municipales seront organisées en mai prochain dans l'ensemble du royaume, a annoncé mercredi à Amman le ministre des Affaires rurales et municipales, Abdoul Karim al-Dughmi. Le premier scrutin devrait, selon lui, se dérouler à Zarqa, deuxième ville du pays. Les municipalités sont actuellement dirigées par des comités nommés par le gouvernement.

CCA. Les premiers ministres des pays membres du Conseil de coopération arabe (CCA) se réuniront le 16 janvier à Bagdad. Il s'agit, a indiqué mercredi le secrétaire général du CCA, d'une conférence préparatoire au quatrième sommet de l'organisation, qui doit se dérouler en février à Amman.

OLP-Analysaire. L'OLP organise du 10 au 16 janvier au Caire un festival culturel pour célébrer le 25e anniversaire de la lutte armée palestinienne. 25 artistes et écrivains des territoires occupés devraient participer à la manifestation, que Yasser Arafat et Hossni Moubarak inaugureront ensemble. Le chef de l'OLP a par ailleurs assuré jeudi les responsables du mouvement israélien «Toujours la main à la paix», qu'il les rencontrera personnellement à l'occasion du rassemblement d'un millier de pacifistes israéliens prévu dans la capitale égyptienne fin janvier ou début février. Selon l'OLP, des parlementaires européens participeront également à l'événement.

Soutien. L'Arabie Saoudite a versé mardi à l'OLP 18,06 millions de dollars, montant de sa contribution pour le dernier trimestre de 1989 au Fonds de soutien à l'intifada. Ryad s'est ainsi acquitté de la totalité de son engagement pour l'année écoulée, soit une somme de 72,24 millions de dollars.

Accalmie. L'interposition d'unités palestiniennes entre les milices chiites rivales, qui se battent depuis deux semaines au Sud-Liban a permis d'instaurer jeudi un calme relatif dans la région. Seuls des tirs intermittents se poursuivaient hier soir à l'est de Saïda. Les combattants palestiniens du Fatah de Yasser Arafat avaient pris position mercredi sur une colline, que se disputent Amal et le Hezbollah, pour mettre fin aux accrochages.

Aoun-BNP. Michel Aoun a confirmé mercredi les informations, publiées par l'hebdomadaire satirique français «Le Canard Enchaîné», selon lesquelles il dispose de 15 millions de dollars sur des comptes de la banque BNP en France. Répondant qu'il s'agit de «comptes secrets», le général chrétien libanais a affirmé que cet argent ne sert qu'à «la défense» (du régime chrétien). La BNP, de son côté, a porté plainte à Paris mercredi pour violation du secret professionnel.

Pirates. Deux pirates, équipés d'une vedette rapide ont été arrêtés aux Emirats après avoir attaqué lundi un navire marchand dans le Golfe d'Oman, émirat nommé la «Côte de Pirates». Les deux hommes avaient volé pour plus de 2,5 millions de marchandises en pleine mer. Il s'agit, selon la presse d'Abou Dhabi, du premier acte de piraterie recensé dans la région depuis plusieurs décennies.

Noriega. Arrêté mercredi soir par les troupes de l'armée américaine à sa sortie de l'ambassade du Vatican à Panama, le général Manuel Antonio Noriega a été officiellement inculpé de complicité de trafic de drogue au Panama, a comparu dans l'après-midi devant un juge fédéral, qui lui a communiqué les sept chefs d'accusation portés contre lui en février 1988 par la justice américaine. La reddition du général Noriega, ancien agent de la CIA (centrale de renseignement américaine) a mis fin à près de deux semaines de blocus militaire de la nonciature apostolique de Panama.

Havel. Le nouveau président de la République tchécoslovaque a effectué mardi une courte visite de travail à Berlin-Est puis à Munich, où il s'est respectivement entretenu avec son homologue est-allemand et le premier ministre, puis avec le chancelier Kohl. Pour sa première visite à l'étranger depuis son élection, le 29 décembre, Václav Havel a notamment déclaré qu'il ne craignait pas l'unification allemande «dans un cadre démocratique et européen».

Démolition. «Nous allons démolir le mur de Berlin, il est devenu inutile», a déclaré mercredi le chef de l'Etat est-allemand dans une interview au journal «Bild Zeitung». Manfred Gerlach a précisé que le mur pourrait être remplacé par de simples installations marquant la frontière «comme dans les autres pays». Le maire de Berlin-Est a fait savoir le même jour qu'il penchait plutôt pour son «remplacement par un grillage».

Pollution. La ville et la région de Lyon (sud-est de la France) ont connu du 29 décembre au 1er janvier l'alerte à la pollution atmosphérique la plus longue jamais enregistrée en France. Des émissions élevées de dioxyde de soufre avaient été enregistrées à la fin du mois dernier en raison d'un anticyclone responsable d'un «couvercle» thermique au dessus de cette région très industrialisée.

Vol. Huit toiles d'Henri Matisse ont été volées la semaine dernière à Nice (sud de la France), dans la résidence même du peintre, décédé en 1954. Les cambrioleurs se sont introduits dans la maison après en avoir escaladé la façade et ont coupé les œuvres au cutter. Les tableaux ont été estimés à 13 millions de dollars.

Eiffel. La Tour Eiffel a vu défiler près de 5,6 millions de visiteurs en 1989, année de son centenaire, a annoncé lundi la société d'exploitation du monument parisien. Ce nombre constitue probablement le record des dix dernières années. Depuis son inauguration, le 31 mars 1889 par son constructeur Gustave Eiffel, plus de 120 millions de personnes ont visité la Tour.

Concerts. Daniel Barenboim dirigera le Philharmonique de Berlin, en qualité de chef invité, du 8 au 17 avril prochains à l'occasion d'une tournée de la formation en Israël. Barenboim travaille actuellement à Berlin-Ouest à l'écriture d'un «Persil» de Wagner avec l'orchestre que dirigea jusqu'à sa mort l'Autrichien Herbert von Karajan.

A L'AFFICHE

CINEMA
Floyd, the wall: Gorillas in the mist; Dead poet society; Dances of 7; Et Dieu créa la femme (USA); Working girl; Mississippi burning; Billy; Betrayed.
Lundi 8: The front; Hanna and her sisters; Play it again, Sam; Midnight summer six; comedy; Angel heart.
Mardi 9: 2; Assault 13%; Barbarella; The passer; The last emperor.
Mercredi 10: Good, bad and ugly; Mad Max (I); Scanners; La Maîtresse du lieutenant; Zephrin; Zephrin.
Jeudi 11: Cherry 2.000; Silver bullets; Nicholas and Alexandra; The postman always rings twice; Isolated in Alex; Vendetta 12; Salsa; Portrait of Genny; John and Mary; Francis; Cat people.

Films en version originale. Tél: 663961.
Route de l'université de Jordanie, à droite après l'hôtel Jérusalem puis première à gauche. Le club-chef se trouve à environ 300m, sur la gauche.

EXPOSITION
Le Secre, de Jacques Rouffo, avec Gérard Depardieu, Jean Carmet et Michel Piccoli (1978). Quand un modeste inspecteur des impôts et son fringant associé se mettent à spéculer sur le sucre...
Centre culturel français, mardi 9 janvier à 20h00 (en français, sous-titré en arabe).

TELEVISION
Silence, on tourne. 20 années de cinéma français, nous tournons par Jean-Pierre Maudy et Rahaf Badaro, et illustrées par de nombreux extraits de films.
JTV, dimanche 7 janvier à 19h15.

65 députés ont voté la confiance à Moudar Badrane

Majorité conditionnelle pour le gouvernement

Au terme de trois journées de débats, la Chambre des députés a voté lundi la confiance au gouvernement de Moudar Badrane par 65 voix, contre 9 et 6 abstentions. Le succès du

premier ministre ne lui garantit cependant pas de majorité stable.

Trois jours consécutifs de débats, 47 demandes de paroles: jamais le Parlement jordanien n'a connu, de toute son histoire, séance aussi longue. Et aussi controversée. Car, 65 des 80 députés ont voté lundi pour la confiance au gouvernement de Moudar Badrane. Mais le premier ministre a également été classé de sévères critiques.

Thouqan al-Hindawi a notamment accusé M. Badrane de porter lui aussi la responsabilité de l'endettement du royaume. Rejetant les arguments du nouveau cabinet, selon lesquels les raisons de la crise économique sont imputables au précédent gouvernement de Zeid Rifai, le député d'Irbid et ancien vice-premier ministre du cabinet déchu en avril dernier s'est lancé dans la démonstration du con-

traire. Chiffres à l'appui. Rappelant que Moudar Badrane avait été à la tête du gouvernement de 1976 à 1984, Thouqan al-Hindawi a affirmé que les emprunts de l'Etat s'élevaient à 7 milliards de dollars durant cette période, soit à peine un milliard de moins que sous Zeid Rifai. Quant à la corruption, «elle a fait partie de la vie jordanienne», a-t-il lancé à l'Assemblée.

Qualifiés d'«attaques personnelles», «violentes» et «indécentes» par certains de ses collègues, ses propos ont provoqué l'indignation de plusieurs députés. 7 autres parlementaires, qui comme lui ont voté «non» lundi soir. Ainsi de Yacoub Karash, député islamiste indépendant, ou encore de Chahid Abdel Abou Zassat, fon-

damentaliste de la coalition des Frères musulmans, tous deux députés d'Amman.

Ce dernier s'est d'ailleurs désolidarisé de la conférence, en refusant la confiance au gouvernement. Les 19 autres élus de l'association ont en effet accordé leur soutien à Moudar Badrane. Perçu par les observateurs comme un succès pour le nouveau cabinet et une victoire personnelle pour le premier ministre, ce ralliement reste néanmoins fragile.

Pendant les trois journées de débats, les extrémistes religieux et leurs sympathisants, qui représentent le principal courant à la Chambre, ont longuement hésité. Revenant à la charge après leur échec au moment de la formation du gouvernement,

début décembre, les Frères musulmans ont exigé la mise en application stricte de la Sharia (loi islamique), la suppression totale de la loi martiale, ou encore la réhabilitation des fonctionnaires écartés de leur travail pour «raison politique».

En promettant un renforcement de l'interdiction de la vente d'alcool par des musulmans, de sa consommation lors de réceptions officielles, et en assurant que les lois du pays s'inspirent pleinement de la Sharia, Moudar Badrane a emporté leur adhésion. Une adhésion néanmoins qualifiée par les députés islamistes conservateurs de simple «chance» donnée au premier ministre.

Alain Renon.

Projet japonais pour 2020

Hôtel de l'espace

L'une des plus grandes entreprises japonaises de construction étudie actuellement un projet d'installation d'un hôtel, en orbite autour de la Terre. «L'établissement» pourrait ouvrir ses portes en 2020.

Dans une trentaine d'années, des touristes fortunés à la recherche de sensations fortes pourront s'envoler vers le premier hôtel de l'espace. Ce projet fait actuellement l'objet d'une étude approfondie par l'une des plus grandes sociétés de construction japonaises, Shimizu Corp., la première au Japon à avoir créé son propre département de recherche spatiale.

En orbite autour de la Terre à environ 450 km d'altitude, l'hôtel en question sera constitué de modules transportés par avion spatial et assemblés dans l'espace par des astronautes équipés de robots. Construit autour d'un cylindre de 240 m

de long, il comprendra au sommet un large disque sur lequel viendront se «poser» 64 chambres, capables d'accueillir 100 visiteurs. Un grand module pyramidal, placé sous les chambres, servira de hall de réception.

Selon l'étude réalisée par Shimizu, cet hôtel devra effectuer une rotation de trois tours par minute sur lui-même pour créer une pesanteur artificielle, proche de celle de la Terre. Le week-end spatial ne sera cependant pas à la portée de toutes les bourses. La firme japonaise évalue le prix d'un séjour de 48 heures, pension et voyage compris... entre 176.000 et 211.000 dollars (D'après agences).

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EC trade proposals fall short of Gulf Arab hopes

BAHRAIN (R) — European Community (EC) proposals for a free trade pact with Gulf Arab states fall far short of the developing bloc's expectations and will make negotiations long and difficult, regional officials say.

Members of the six-state Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) say they are disappointed with trade proposals approved by the EC last month because they do not lift painful protective barriers against the group's key industries.

One obstacle to a quick agreement with the EC is the failure of the Gulf states so far to agree common tariffs within the region, necessary in any bargaining with the European grouping.

But the bigger problem is what the GCC sees as EC insistence on blocking its crucial petrochemical and other products.

"The proposed draft does not fulfill our desire for a more open market between the two regions," Abdullah Al Quwzei, GCC secretary-general for economic affairs, said.

"We are attempting to diversify our economies into new avenues for petrochemicals, aluminium and refined products... there are measures which will hinder the accessibility of these to the European market," he told Reuters by telephone from his Riyadh office.

Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates form the GCC, an economic and political alliance.

The group has been urging the 12-member EC, its main trading partner, to lift tariffs on GCC exports to help narrow a trade deficit which reached \$4.4 billion in 1988.

EC products account for over 40 per cent of the GCC market. Most enter with little or no duty while cheaply-produced Gulf petrochemicals face tariffs of up to 14 per cent.

EC Industrial Affairs Commissioner Martin Bangemann visited Saudi Arabia and Bahrain last week in a bid to reassure Gulf officials that the scheduled 1992 breakdown of remaining barriers within the EC was not meant to keep out their products.

Quwzei described the talks as encouraging but said a period of "long and complicated negotiations" lay ahead.

Under the free trade proposals — which follow a preliminary economic agreement signed in 1988 — GCC states would scrap duties on all European products over eight years.

In return, the Community would immediately eliminate duties on all GCC products except for three lists of "sensitive" items which include most that matter. Tariffs on these would be phased out over eight to 12 years.

The proposals would also allow GCC states to put 20 per cent duties on some products to protect infant industries up to a value of 10 per cent of total trade.

EC industrialists fear a flood of cut-price imports from the area.

One GCC official said the proposals were unfair because the lists of sensitive products — which include about 46 types of petrochemicals — were too long.

Another said it would take months before direct talks could begin because the GCC had yet to agree on key policy issues.

"The GCC had to agree to freeze customs tariffs during the negotiating period and to decide on reference tariffs from which to make their concessions," he said.

The GCC decided at an annual summit last December to further



Abdullah Qawzei

delay a proposed customs pact for three years. The plan to set a common scale of import duties was first mooted in 1984.

However, officials from both sides say meetings scheduled between GCC and EC petrochemical chiefs in Brussels in January and between industrialists from both sides in Spain in February would help speed up a trade agreement.

"It's a question of industry, not politics," James Knibbs, an aide to Bangemann, said in Bahrain Monday.

"Everyone is afraid now but they will get to know each other and identify and discuss problem points," he said.

Foreign ministers from the GCC and the EC would also discuss the issue at a meeting on March 17 in Muscat, Knibbs said.

International organisations guide shift from communist economies

WASHINGTON (AP) — No body has much experience moving a country from communism toward a system with a major role for private enterprise, so East European governments have turned for guidance to a pair of worldwide organisations based in Washington.

The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) are separate organisations, but they are owned by the same 152 countries, which have many different mixes of public and private ownership.

The Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, East Germany and Bulgaria are not among the 152 countries that belong to the bank and fund. The Soviets say they want to join, but so far the United States has been opposed. Some of the new Czechoslovak leaders also want membership. East Germany has a special relationship through West Germany, one of the leading participants in the two organisations.

The countries that belong to the IMF and World Bank influence governments mostly through loans and the conditions they attach to them. Both generally promote conservative policies: Sale of state-owned industry, reduction of government deficits, abolition of price controls, slowing of wage increases, promotion of exports, cuts in subsidies.

In advising East European countries, the World Bank and IMF will be drawing in part from their experience working with the communist government in mainland China since 1981.

Loans for China totalling \$780 million were postponed by World Bank President Barber Conable last June after the Beijing government's brutal crushing of the movement for democracy. Up to that point the Chinese leadership, with strong support from the bank, had been increasing the role of private enterprise. Recently they have again emphasised central planning.

The bank has continued to disburse \$4.4 billion worth of loans granted earlier, and a nine-man permanent mission of the bank quickly returned to Beijing after the crackdown. Conable has said he hopes that new loans can be granted soon.

"We're setting up a unit to deal with socialist economies and to see how much cross-fertilisation there can be with Europe and Asia," said Shahid Yusuf, a Pakistani who has been handling the bank's relations with China.

He added in an interview that there will be important differences from country to country, for example in the key area of farming. He said that in China, 90 per cent of the farm households now work independently,

although they are still obliged to sell some of their production to the state.

"In the Soviet Union, he said, it would be harder to break up the big state farms, while in Poland the communist government always left farmers independent.

To get a loan from the fund, a government has to promise new policies. Poland's non-communist leadership has been the first East European government to do that since the recent upheavals. In return, it is expected to receive a loan of \$710 million.

The borrowing government's promises generally result in austerity: Higher prices for food and other basic goods as government subsidies are cut and higher unemployment as loss-making enterprises are shut down.

The fund for years has been making such arrangements with Third World countries. In some of them the new policies have brought violent riots, most recently in Venezuela.

The fund says that the actual measures taken are the responsibility of each government: For example, the fund requires the country's budget deficit to be reduced if it is to get help, but the government decides whether to cut spending on soldiers or on schools.

Last February, the new government of President Carlos Andres Perez in Venezuela took a series of measures following agreement with the fund, including cuts in subsidies that brought a rise of 30 per cent to 50 per cent in bus fares and a 90 per cent increase in gasoline prices. More than 200 people died in the disturbances that followed.

In Poland, bus fares and gasoline prices were doubled at the start of the new year after Michel Camdessus, the fund's managing director, completed talks with the government. The fund's member governments are expected to endorse the plan for Poland in late January or early February.

Hungary is negotiating for the fund's help, seeking as much as \$200 million in loans.

An agreement between the fund and the borrowing government has teeth. If the fund decides that the government has not kept its promises, disbursements are cut off. That occurred last year with Yugoslavia, a communist-ruled country which has had 11 separate agreements with the fund. Eight of them have been completed to the fund's satisfaction. But Yugoslavia now has another crisis and a new accord is being negotiated.

Because of the fund's stiff requirements for loans, government and private lenders often wait for it to act before lending anything themselves. The willingness of the fund to take the risk gives them confidence, and the amounts they lend can add up to much larger sums. They often follow the fund in cutting off disbursements if the fund's conditions are not met.

Algerian parliament rejects tax increases

ALGIERS (R) — Algeria's parliament has rejected a government request for tax increases on some goods, including fuel and approved a budget with a 3.5 billion dinar (\$424 million) deficit, Economy Minister Ghazi Hidouci has said. The official Algerian news agency APS quoted Hidouci as telling a news conference the amendments imposed by parliament during a one-week budget debate will cause the government financial problems. "But if (the government) reserves the right to go back to parliament later with a supplementary finance bill," he said. The new budget deficit figure was 500 million dinars (\$60 million) higher than the one reported by APS at the start of the debate, but the agency did not specify whether the parliament had increased provisions. It compares with a 5.1 billion dinars (\$635 million) deficit budgeted for 1989. Hidouci said the proposed new taxes on building materials, paint, wood, iron and some imports among others were directed more at the rich than the poor. "They were meant to finance a building fund and a youth employment fund... this logic was not understood by the deputies," he added. Hidouci said the government had adopted a policy of freeing the productive public sector by raising prices but gave no details of any price changes.

AMMAN EXCHANGE RATES

Thursday, January 4, 1989			
Central Bank official rates			
	Buy	Sell	
U.S. dollar	699.0	655.0	
Pound Sterling	1044.6	1054.0	
Deutschmark	376.2	380.0	

Amman Financial Market weekly trading

Following is a summary of trading during last week and the previous week:

	Dec. 30-Jan. 3	Dec. 23-27
Daily average	JD 2,584,303	JD 1,069,881
Total volume	JD 10,337,213	JD 9,949,611
Total shares	5,483,642	5,349,405
No. of contracts	5,148	4,350
Sectoral trading:		
Industrial	JD 5,483,742 (53.0%)	JD 4,512,500 (45.2%)
Financial	JD 3,002,843 (29.0%)	JD 3,841,420 (38.6%)
Service	(16.9%)	(14.6%)
Insurance	(1.1%)	(1.5%)
Share price index	140.2	137.3
No. of companies	64	68
Price movement (rise)	54	36
(decline)	4	23
(stable)	6	9

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at midsession on the London foreign exchange and bullion markets Friday.

One Sterling	1.6320/30	U.S. dollars
One U.S. dollar	1.1600/10	Canadian dollar
	1.6888/95	Deutschmarks
	1.9060/70	Dutch guilders
	1.5444/54	Swiss francs
	35.48/53	Belgian francs
	5.7650/700	French francs
	1266/1267	Italian lire
	144.20/30	Japanese yen
	6.1800/50	Swedish crowns
	6.5600/50	Norwegian crowns
	6.5720/75	Danish crowns
One ounce of gold	401.45/401.95	U.S. dollars

WORLD STOCK MARKETS

SYDNEY — Australian stocks closed firmer for the fourth time this week as the market's bullish tone continued. The All Ordinaries index rose 4.0 to 1,710.8.

TOKYO — Reports that Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev cancelled all January meetings with foreign officials to focus on domestic events sent the Tokyo share index tumbling. The Nikkei fell 438.12 to 38,274.76.

HONG KONG — Tokyo's retreat gave investors an excuse to sell on a market lacking enthusiasm or news. The Hang Seng index tumbled 29.01 to 2,839.94.

SINGAPORE — Prices fell in a nervous reaction to Tokyo's plunge but one analyst said there were no local negative factors. The revamped Straits times industrial index lost 2.70 to 1,531.47.

BOMBAY — Share prices rallied strongly despite higher contagio (carry-forward) charges fixed for new account trading.

FRANKFURT — Equities fell on fears that Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev's decision to delay meetings with foreign visitors would harm liberalisation in Eastern Europe. The Dax index ended 15.88 points lower at 1,820.00.

ZURICH — Shares recovered part of early losses at the close after a weak start prompted by falls in Tokyo and Frankfurt.

PARIS — French share prices ended lower on profit-taking after sharp rises Thursday. The CAC index ended 12.06 points lower at 1,994.36.

LONDON — Prices ended weak responding to profit-taking and a mixed Wall Street. Dealers said the market was undergoing a period of consolidation following the strong new year rally. The FTSE 100 share index closed 7.1 points lower at 2,444.5.

NEW YORK — U.S. stocks drifted lower after a volatile morning. By 1720 GMT the Dow was 4.08 points down at 2,792.88.

U.S. Exim bank sets up loss reserve

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. government's Export-Import (Exim) Bank announced Thursday that it is setting up a reserve of \$4.8 billion to cover loans, largely to Third World countries, that may not be repaid.

Henry Gonzalez, chairman of the banking committee of the U.S. House of Representatives, said the bank now has a "negative net worth" of \$4 billion, meaning

the bank owes \$4 billion more than it is owed to it.

An aide to Gonzalez said that if the bank were privately owned, it would have been bankrupt long ago. But private banks also have loan loss reserves, and many have increased those reserves substantially in recent years.

"This action is a revaluation of our assets and is not a write-off," said bank chairman John Macomber.

ber. "We will continue to expect that all loans and guarantees will be paid in full."

The action sets aside \$3.2 billion to cover the bank's direct loans and another \$1.6 billion to cover guarantees it has given on loans made by commercial banks. It amounts to about 40 per cent of the outstanding loans it has made and its other transactions.

Exim, as the bank is often called, has been losing money since 1982 and is expected to lose hundreds of millions more between now and 1995. The main reason is that it has had to borrow at high rates of interest. Its own loans have been made at much lower rates to encourage other countries to buy U.S. goods, such as jet planes and nuclear power plants.

'Comecon is obsolete'

SOFIA (R) — The Soviet-led trading group Comecon is obsolete and should be restructured to reflect the changing face of Eastern Europe, a Soviet official said.

Sergei Ouganov, a member of the advance Soviet delegation to next week's Comecon meeting in Bulgaria told a news conference Thursday the organisation's 10 member countries agreed on the need to restructure the trade bloc.

"The Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (Comecon) was a mechanism for cooperation which accomplished much for four decades but ran into negative tendencies in the 1970s," Ouganov said.

"It has become old and obsolete and should be replaced by a new structure which harmonises the economic inequalities," he added.

Prime ministers of the 10 Comecon member states will meet in Sofia on Jan. 9 for the group's 45th regular session.

Since Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev came to power in 1985, there have been serious attempts to reform Comecon. The collapse of communist rule throughout Eastern Europe last year has raised serious questions about its future role.

Ouganov said the meeting would discuss the possibility of an economic summit with the European Community and the European Free Trade Association.

Comecon groups the Soviet Union, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, Romania, East Germany, Vietnam, Cuba and Mongolia.

Ouganov said Romania would be fully represented by its new leadership.

S. Korean trade surplus shrinks

SEOUL (AP) — Faced with sluggish exports and rising imports, South Korea posted a trade surplus in 1989 of \$1 billion, its smallest in four years, the government has announced.

Last year's surplus was far below the country's 1988 trade surplus of \$8.88 billion, the trade and industry ministry said.

South Korea began to register a trade surplus in 1986 when it stood at \$3.1 billion, followed by \$6.2 billion in 1987 and \$8.88 billion in 1988, according to official statistics.

Officials said South Korean exports last year amounted to \$62.3 billion, up 2.6 per cent from 1988 while imports, reflecting the country's import liberalisation, jumped 18.3 per cent to a value of \$61.3 billion. The preliminary figures were on a customs clearance basis.

It was the smallest annual trade growth rate since 1962 when South Korea began to develop an export-oriented economy. The previous lowest growth rate was 2.8 per cent growth in 1982. South Korea's export increases had averaged more than 20 per cent a year from 1962 through last year.

The 1989 slowdown in exports was blamed mainly on the loss of competitiveness in price and

quality from the cumulative impact of the South Korean currency's substantial appreciation, steep wage increases and serious, sometimes violent labour-management disputes in the past three years.

The setback in exports also was attributed to foreign protectionism, particularly in the European Community for electronic goods, as well as declining imports by China since its military crackdown on pro-democracy protests last June.

Officials said South Korean footwear exports last year declined 6.6 per cent from the previous year to a value of \$3.55 billion, and auto exports plunged

35.3 per cent to \$2.2 billion. The reduced auto exports were attributed to lower demand in the United States.

But electronics exports were quoted as rising 6.7 per cent to \$17.4 billion dollars; textiles increasing 7.1 per cent to \$15.1 billion; steel and other metals up 6.6 per cent to \$6.5 billion; ships up 2.3 per cent to \$1.8 billion and plastics up 1.6 per cent to \$1.3 billion.

The ministry has set this year's export target at \$66 billion while expecting \$68 billion in imports, which would produce the country's first deficit since 1962. Officials and traders generally expect sluggish exports this year.

Britain gives IMF seat to Japan

LONDON (R) — Britain is willing to let Japan, the world's second largest economy, take its place as the second ranking shareholder in the International Monetary Fund (IMF), a British treasury spokesman has said.

Japan, which now holds fifth place in the Washington-based agency, has long been pushing for a higher IMF ranking to reflect its growing economic strength.

Under the British proposals, which could be discussed at a Jan. 25 meeting of the IMF's policy-

making Interim Committee, Britain would drop to fourth place behind West Germany, Europe's most powerful economy.

The United States would remain the biggest shareholder and would pay the largest share of a forthcoming increase in the IMF's \$119 billion resources.

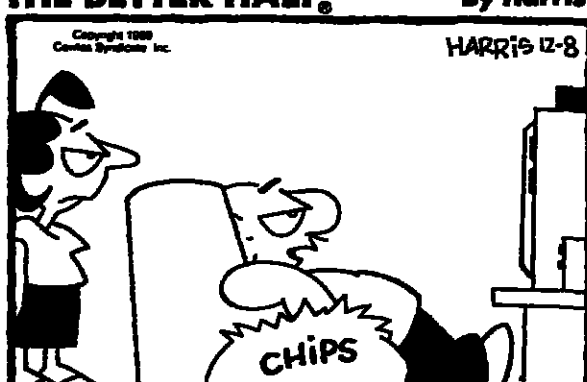
It was unclear how the changes would affect France, currently fourth in the IMF ranking, but French Finance Minister Pierre Berezgony said last September he would be prepared to accept an

equal-fourth ranking with Britain.

The IMF is pushing for its resources to be doubled. Member nations' rankings determine the size of their quotas, or membership subscriptions.

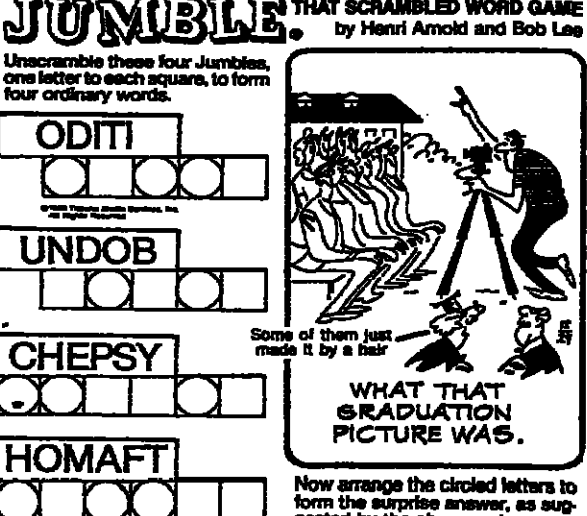
But Washington is reluctant to pump so much money into the fund. A senior U.S. official said it might support a rise slightly above the 35 per cent it has already endorsed, but not until 1992.

THE BETTER HALF.



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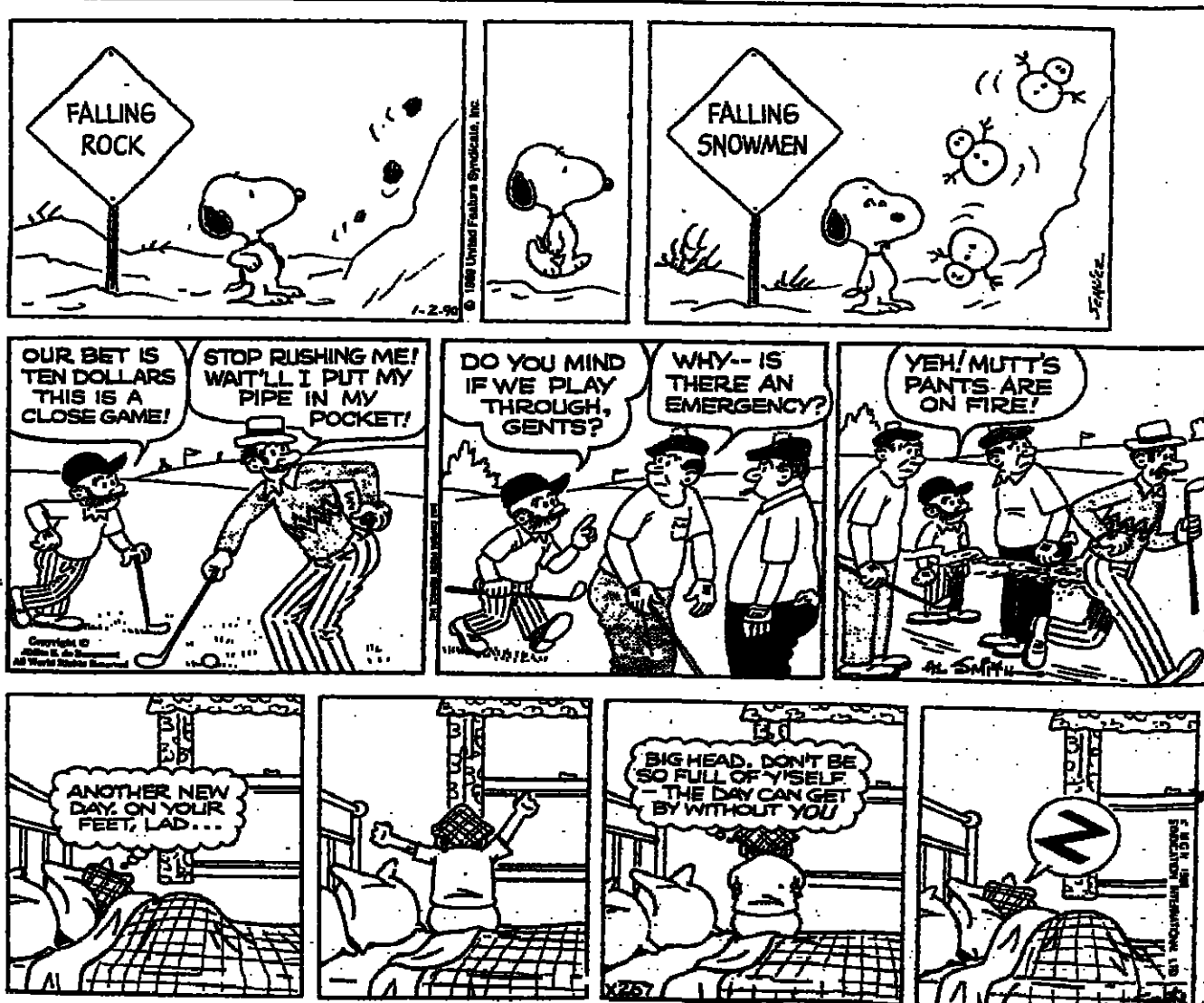


Answers: A. ODITI, UNDOB, CHEPSY, HOMAFT. (Answers tomorrow)

Peanuts

Mutt'n' Jeff

Andy Capp



F.A. Cup:

Coventry aims to memory

LONDON (R) — Coventry City hope to have striker Cyril Regis fit for their Football Association (F.A.) Cup third round tie at Northampton Saturday in which they hope to erase the memory of a humiliating defeat a year ago.

First division Coventry, cup winners in 1987, crashed to a shock third-round defeat against minor league side Sutton United last season and will want to forget that nightmare with a comfortable win against the third division side.

Former England striker Regis is battling to recover from influenza in time for the clash while Aston Villa, second in the first division, will give Danish central defender Kent Nielsen a fitness check before finalising their side for the tie at Blackburn.

Villa had written off Nielsen, a key figure in their rise up the league table, after he limped out of Monday's win at Chelsea with a hamstring injury.

But assistant manager John

Ward said: "The injury is not as serious as we first thought. He has been able to do some training and his chances are 50-50."

Holders Liverpool have reserve goalkeeper Mike Hooper standing by for his first senior outing for a year as Bruce Grobbelaar faces a late fitness check before their trip to Swansea.

Grobbelaar damaged a knee in a collision during Monday's league game with Nottingham Forest and has been under intensive treatment this week.

Norwich, who lost all three of their Christmas and New Year fixtures, will be looking for a change in fortune at fourth division Exeter City.

But with Malcolm Allen still unavailable with a calf injury, manager Dave Stringer is unable to make any changes to a strike force which has scored only two goals in the last five games.

"Teams go through lean spells and so do players, but they don't become bad players overnight

and they deserve a chance to prove themselves," Stringer said. Exeter are unbeaten in 17 games at home and have won five of their last six league and cup games.

Kevin Sheedy, who scored the only goal in Everton's 1-0 win over West Bromwich in a third round replay last season, remains their only main injury worry before their visit to second division Middlesbrough.

The Republic of Ireland midfielder missed the new year's day victory over Luton with an ankle injury but has been under treatment all week and has managed to do some training.

If Sheedy is fit it will pose an interesting selection problem for manager Colin Harvey with winger Peter Beagrie and Pat Nevin most under threat.

Manchester United could take a gamble on the fitness of captain Bryan Robson for their game at Nottingham Forest on Sunday.

Robson has been out for three games with a troublesome groin strain and has not trained all week.

Zvereva defeats Sukova

BRISBANE, Australia (AP) — Soviet Natalia Zvereva upset top seed and defending champion Helena Sukova of Czechoslovakia 6-3, 6-4 Friday to advance to the semifinals of the Danone Queensland Open women's tennis tournament.

Austrian Judith Wiesner topped second-seeded Jana Novotna of Czechoslovakia 7-6 (8-6), 6-3 in another quarterfinal match at the \$150,000 tournament.

In other quarterfinals, Rachel McQuillan of Australia defeated Kimiko Date of Japan 6-0, 6-4 and Brenda Schultz of the Netherlands downed Kristin Godridge of Australia 7-5, 6-3.

Sixth-seeded Zvereva sparked against the tall Czech, countering her opponent's aggressive serve-and-volley game with mixed passing shots and lobs.

Zvereva said she was playing her best since she was a losing finalist to Steffi Graf at Hilton Head, South Carolina, last March.

"My shots were going all over the place. I tried to stay back a bit more but I couldn't get my shots to work," said Sukova. "It was more me losing the match than

her winning it."

Wiesner, the 10th seed, trailed 5-2 in the first set tiebreaker against Novotna and had to save a set point, but once she took the first set it was plain sailing against a surprisingly lackluster second seed.

"I was more aggressive on my forehand and she hit the ball too hard when she was under pressure," Wiesner said.

McQuillan stamped herself as a player of great potential with her convincing victory over Date, who had defeated two seeds to reach this stage of the tournament.

The Australian played a consistent game while Date was over-ambitious and made a series of unforced errors.

The first set lasted just 24 minutes as McQuillan breezed to a 6-0 victory. She then raced 3-0 up in the second before faltering briefly.

"This tournament I've been off to fast starts but I've always eased off a bit in the second set,"



Natalia Zvereva

she said.

Schultz, the second-place finisher at the tournament last year, showed too much power for Godridge, a 16-year-old.

The semifinals Saturday will pit Wiesner against McQuillan and Zvereva against Schultz.

The tournament is one of a series of warm-up events for the Australian Open, which begins Jan. 15 in Melbourne.

Syrian wins Queen Alia show-jumping tournament

AMMAN (Petra) — Deputising for His Majesty King Hussein, Her Majesty Queen Noor Friday distributed cups and medals to winners in the Queen Alia Show-Jumping Championship which was held between Jordan and Syria at the indoor riding school of the Arabian Horse Club.

Syrian rider Radwan Qassar won the first place followed in the second place by Jordanian Hani Bisharat and Yasser Sharif in the third place.

Her Royal Highness Princess Haya Bint Al Hussein came fourth in the competition.

The competition was attended by Chief Chamberlain Prince Raad Ibn Zaid and Basal Al Assad, the son of Syrian President Hafez Al Assad.

The event which took place in the afternoons of Thursday and Friday was sponsored by Hotel Jordan Intercontinental.

Australian Open surface under the fire from players

SYDNEY (R) — The artificial rubberised court surface used for the Australian Open came under fire Wednesday from players worried they could be fried alive if a heatwave hits the national tennis centre later this month.

John Fitzgerald said conditions at the Australian hardcourt championship, played on the same rebound ace surface used at the open, were life-threatening because of temperatures of around 40 degrees Celsius (104 Fahrenheit).

"If it rained, we'd come off. Yet we go and play in those conditions," the Australian said after his first round victory over Belgian qualifier Xavier Daufresne.

"What if a guy died out there? Some of the guys were talking in the locker room and said officials should make an urgent review of conditions," he told journalists.

The court surface reached 60 degrees Celsius (140 Fahrenheit)

in Adelaide, causing five ball girls and boys to faint.

The bowl-like centre court at the national tennis centre, which hosts the open from January 15 to 28, can become unbearably hot in bright sun which reflects off the surface and the concrete surrounds.

Last year world number one Ivan Lendl of Czechoslovakia was close to collapse after a marathon semifinal played in hot sun on centre court against Austrian Thomas Muster.

Sweden's Mats Wilander was one of many players who suggested the roof on the centre court should be closed if conditions became dangerously hot, an idea which organisers Tennis Australia are now considering.

At present the roof is only closed to keep out the rain.

Tennis Australia president Geoff Pollard told journalists the retractable roof could be closed during the final four days

Brazil prepares for WC

RIO DE JANEIRO, Brazil (AP) — Soccer officials announced Brazil will play six games prior to the World Cup in Italy but postponed a decision on where the team will stay during the tournament.

Coach Sebastiao Lazaroni met with officials of the Brazilian Soccer Confederation Wednesday night in Rio to define the team's schedule of preparation for the cup, which opens June 8 in Rome.

Lazaroni said the Brazilian team would face Australia, England, Romania and Bulgaria in exhibition games in Europe and

Brazil. All except Bulgaria are among the 24 teams qualified for the cup.

The squad is to leave May 16 for Europe, where it will face a team of top players in Madrid, Spain, and later the Umbria team of Italy.

The game against Austria is scheduled for Feb. 21 in Vienna but must be confirmed by Austrian soccer authorities, Lazaroni said. If Austria declines, Brazil will play France, Poland or Ireland, he said.

The next game is against England in London's Wembley Stadium on March 8.

Foreman vs. Cooney — old men fight again

NEW YORK (AP) — George Foreman has a prediction for his Jan. 15 heavyweight fight against Gerry Cooney. "I will show up," the 40-year-old former champion says. "I do believe that I am going to make it."

But who's going to win, George? "Of course, I am," Foreman said. "I'm no Sugar Ray Leonard, so I'm not going to outbox him, I'll tell you that. I'm looking for a knockout."

Could you predict a round, like

Muhammad Ali used to do?

"When guys were doing that before, I never did like it," he said. "I'm not going to do it now...."

"I know one thing. I like boxing. If it's over in one round, what have I got to do the rest of the night? If it's over in 10, at least I spent some time doing something other than sitting around and being bored."

Foreman, continuing his comeback after 10 years of retirement, says he is down to his

fighting weight of 250 pounds (113 kilograms) for Cooney and "in extremely good shape."

"I've got all the weight off," said Foreman, who weighed more than 300 pounds (136 kilograms) when the fight was announced in September. "In fact, I've had to put some weight back on. I did slip down to 245 (111 kilograms), but when I go into the ring I want to be 250 (113) — no lighter."

The 10-round fight, co-promoted by Bob Arum and Caesar's Palace, will be held at the Atlantic City convention center and televised on a closed circuit and pay-per-view basis. Each fighter is expected to make about \$1.2 million.

Cooney, 33, has not fought since he was knocked out in the fifth round by Michael Spinks on June 15, 1987. He fought only four times after losing his title shot by 13th-round knockout to Larry Holmes on June 11, 1982. Cooney is 28-2 with 24 knockouts.

Foreman is 64-2 with 60 knockouts and 19-0 with 18 knockouts since he shelved his career as a Baptist minister to return to the ring. Cooney will be the first

fighter on Foreman's comeback list with a recognizable name, and the question has occurred: Why Cooney when the real goal is a shot at Mike Tyson's title?

"I've got to keep fighting. Why not Gerry Cooney? ... If I tell you that I got into the ring, and I'm not worried, I'd be fooling you," Foreman said. "I'm confident, but I take nothing for granted. It will be a tough fight. I want it to be tough. I want people who paid money to see this fight to go away saying, 'wow what was that?'"

In fact, Foreman said he already was approached by promoter Don King about a fight with Tyson in June, but he didn't like the way he was approached. So, he turned it down for the time being. Foreman wants Arum and Ron Weathers cut in on any promotional deal, which apparently was not in King's plans at the time.

King promoted some of Foreman's biggest fights, including the "rumble in the jungle" in Zaire.

"When I came back on the scene, King did not send me so much as one hammock or one piece of combread," Foreman said.

GOREN BRIDGE

BY CHARLES GOREN AND OMAR SHARIF
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PRESERVE YOUR WINNERS

Both vulnerable. South deals.

NORTH
♠ Q 7 5 2
♥ 10 9 6 3
♦ A Q 4
♣ 6 2

WEST EAST
♠ A 10 9 ♠ K 8 3
♥ 5 2 ♥ 7 4
♦ 10 8 6 2 ♦ K J 9 3
♣ J 10 8 4 ♣ 9 7 5 3

SOUTH
♠ J 6 4
♥ A Q J 8
♦ 7 5
♣ A K Q

The bidding:
South West North East
1 ♠ Pass 2 ♠ Pass
4 ♠ Pass Pass Pass

Opening lead: Jack of ♠

Sometimes declarer must combine more than one line to achieve an optimum result. Both themes in this hand were discussed individually in recent columns. Can you spot them?

There is nothing to the auction. Once North could do no more than raise to two hearts, declarer had no interest beyond game.

West's jack of clubs opening lead

was won in the closed hand. Declarer drew trumps and tried the diamond finesse. East exited with a club. Eventually declarer had to tackle spades, and it took only reasonable care by the defenders to assure themselves of three tricks in that suit and a one-trick ace.

Going in, declarer had nine fast tricks. As long as the opponents could be compelled to breach spades, declarer would have to come to one trick in that suit by force. How could that be accomplished?

The only way is to make any other return fatal. After winning the opening lead and drawing trumps, declarer should cash the remaining clubs, discarding a diamond from dummy. Now the scene is set for an endplay.

Declarer must ignore the diamond finesse in favor of playing ace and queen of diamonds. It makes no difference which defender wins the trick—either must present declarer with the contract. A minor-suit return allows declarer to discard a spade from hand while ruffing in dummy. And opening up the spade suit gives declarer his 10th trick by force.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SATURDAY JANUARY 6, 1990

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: Sit back and observe what is happening. Avoid doing anything until you have the chance to evaluate things. Pursue hobbies that are interesting to you and be active.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) A business journey with an expert will bring whatever you are currently seeking. In any activities pertaining to the outside world or your family, home is best.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Be sure to return any favours extended to you by friendly associates. Spend a little more money on the things your mate enjoys doing together with you.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Showing a generous spirit to important friends brings them much closer to you. Introduce a charming friend of whom you are fond of into your circle of friends.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Quietly doing something for a couple you like will bring you more social prestige. Actively displaying a sense of fun will calm your attachment.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Make arrangements to see friends at accepted entertainment sites when mutually convenient. Now is the time to plan that anticipated trip with your attachment.

VERGO: (August 22 to September 22) If you need assistance with some social activities, men will help the best now. Whatever you do with your attachment, be sure it is on a practical level.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October

22) You now can make a good friend of the most intellectual person you know. A trip you want to take with attachment is in the distant future but consider it.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) You can think out a way with your family to have home conditions heightened. Adding financial benefits will soon be tendered to you.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Longtime partners will come back into your life and you can have a good time with them socially. This is the time for a journey with mine.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Don't push an outside associate you like on a reluctant friend. Avoid inviting friends or highly-placed persons into your home today.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) If you approach a friend diplomatically, you can get some practical benefits you seek. Repeatedly remind your attachment of your affection.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Now you can show your own special gifts in your daily activities. Being truly emotional with your mate will bring improved rapport to you both.

Today's child: If your child were born today he or she will show early in life, a capacity to understand both the needs and motivations of others and will be able to offer sound advice. With the proper education and support this child will prove outstanding in psychology, psychiatry, philosophy, etc.

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ARABIC FOR SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES

The Language Centre at the University of Jordan announces that the intensive course in Modern Standard Arabic for speakers of other languages will commence on Jan. 27, and will last for 16 weeks.

The programme is intensive and classes meet in the morning for 20 hours per week, Saturday-Wednesday. The fee for the course is JD 140. The evening course is non-intensive and classes meet six hours per week.

Those interested please call at the Language Centre for registration.

Cinema Tel: 625155

RAINBOW

LICENCE TO KILL

Performances: 3:30, 6:30, 8:30 p.m.

Cinema Tel: 677420

CONCORD

Rob Lowe... in

OXFORD BLUES

Performances: 3:30, 6:00, 8:30, 10:30 p.m.

Cinema Tel: 634144

PHILADELPHIA

IRON ANGELS

Performances: 3:30, 6:00, 8:30, 10:30 p.m.

Cinema Tel: 675571

NIJOM

Rock Morania... in

Honey, I Shrunk The Kids

Performances: 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

Cinema Tel: 674111

PLAZA

LICENCE TO KILL

Performances: 3:30, 6:00, 8:30, 10:30

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P.O. Box 634, Amman.**

American troops may leave Panama soon U.S. caps invasion of Panama by bringing Noriega to court

MIAMI (Agencies) — The United States Thursday capped its invasion of Panama by bringing deposed military strongman Manuel Antonio Noriega into a Miami court to face drug trafficking charges and prepared to send its soldiers home after their successful mission.

Noriega, dressed in his four-star general's uniform, defiantly refused to recognise the court's jurisdiction, his lawyer saying the invasion of Dec. 20 was illegal and that as head of state Noriega had immunity against prosecution.

Lawyer Frank Rubino told Judge William Hoeveler that the only reason his client left the sanctuary of the Vatican embassy in Panama City Wednesday night after being holed up there for 10 days was a threat by the new Panamanian government to withdraw diplomatic status from the compound. That would allow it to be invaded.

While Washington was basking in its success of achieving the major goal of its invasion of Panama — bringing Noriega to trial — Latin American nations remained strongly opposed to what many have described as "the gunboat diplomacy" used to overthrow him and install a new government.

"The fate of Noriega has nothing to do with the existence, in the country of the canal, of a puppet regime imposed by U.S. tanks, the Mexico City La Jornada said in its lead editorial.

U.S. Defence Department officials said most of the 13,000 American troops who joined 12,000 U.S. troops already based in Panama to protect the Panama Canal could go home within a few weeks.

Defence Secretary Dick Cheney said the surrender of Noriega, indicted by two federal

embassy with the deposed general also gave himself up to U.S. authorities Thursday.

The aide, Nivaldo Madrinan, has been accused by former opposition members of murder, human rights abuses and illegal arrests.

However, three of the general's top allies remained in the embassy and other supporters and relatives were still taking refuge in the Cuban and Peruvian embassies.

Among them were Noriega's wife Felicidad and their three daughters inside the Cuban mission, which has been surrounded by American troops and barbed wire since the early days of the invasion.

U.S. troops arrested a Cuban diplomat and held him for two hours after he was apprehended while walking out of the Cuban ambassador's residence Thursday, another diplomat's wife said.

"He was forced out of the car, separated from the others and taken," said Sandra Farias, wife of Luis Delfin Peres, the second-ranking diplomat in the Cuba embassy.

She said Fernandez walked out of the embassy with six other diplomats who were to drive to the airport to board the first commercial flight to Cuba since the Dec. 20 U.S. invasion toppled Noriega.

U.S. embassy spokeswoman Jan Edmondson said she did not know anything about the incident.

U.S. troops have surrounded the Cuban, Nicaraguan and Libyan embassies since the invasion to prevent Noriega's aides from coming or going.

Panamanians in Miami, many of whom were jailed or forced into exile by Gen. Manuel Noriega, rejoiced Thursday at his

arrest and removal to the United States to face drug charges.

Adela Girolodi, widow of Col. Moises Girolodi, leader of a failed Panamanian coup attempt last October, stood with a crowd of cheering, chanting exiles outside the gates of Homestead Air Force Base, where Noriega's plane landed early Thursday.

"His death was not in vain, and the effort that President Bush made with the invasion of Panama was also not in vain," Mrs. Girolodi said. "I don't want him (Noriega) to die, I want him to suffer slowly for all the damage he has done."

"This is the end of a 21-year nightmare," said Roberto Eisenmann Jr., whose newspaper La Prensa was shut down by Noriega's troops two years ago.

"We've got a destroyed country to rebuild, but when there is liberty everything is possible," Eisenmann, who has been vice chairman of a Miami bank while in exile, arranged to return home Friday and intended to have his presses rolling Sunday.

"We feel that we don't have to fear any more to walk into the streets, to demonstrate, to speak out to enforce liberty, freedom," said Aurelio Barria, who helped organise a civilian crusade against Noriega and left Thursday for Panama.

Eisenmann predicted Noriega would be tried and convicted in the United States and then be prosecuted for human-rights abuses in Panama. But the publisher said Panama has no judiciary and no secure jails to pursue such trials now.

With Noriega out of Panama, "there's no word to say how happy I am," said Irma Endara, whose husband, Luis, is a cousin of Panamanian President Guillermo Endara.

Gorbachev cancels meetings to concentrate on Soviet unrest

MOSCOW (AP) — Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev has cancelled appointments with foreign visitors for the time being to deal with domestic unrest and a political crisis in Lithuania, an informed source said Friday.

Reports in the West of the Soviet president's change of plans sent the Tokyo Stock Exchange into a tailspin. The leading market indicator, the Nikkei Average, dropped 438.12 points, or 1.1 per cent, from the day before.

It was the largest single-day loss since a 647-point plunge on Oct. 16.

To Japan, the worst thing that could happen to the world scenario would be for Gorbachev to drop from sight," Chris Schreiber, an investment analyst with New Japan Securities, said in Tokyo.

The market reaction showed how closely Gorbachev is linked by many in the West to the success of the political reforms and reductions in East-West tensions he has pursued since becoming Kremlin leader in March 1985.

Soviet Foreign Ministry spokesman Gennady Gerasimov, speaking in a telephone interview, would neither confirm nor deny that Gorbachev was putting aside foreign questions to concentrate on domestic problems.

But a senior Communist Party official, asked about Western news reports that Gorbachev had

postponed planned meetings with Britain's opposition leader Neil Kinnock and other foreign dignitaries, replied, "It's right."

"We have many problems right now," he added.

The Communist official, speaking with the understanding he would not be identified by name, mentioned disturbances this week along the Iranian border and the Lithuanian Communist Party's decision to break away from the ruling national party headed by Gorbachev.

Soviet Azerbaijanis tried for four days to force the frontier open and reunite with their ethnic brethren in Iran, tearing down guard towers and prompting the KGB to reinforce security along the frontier.

A protest organiser said Thursday the demonstrators were in retreat.

Meanwhile crowds tore up fences along the Iranian border in fresh unrest in the Soviet Republic of Azerbaijan, a local journalist said Friday.

There was no official confirmation of Thursday's incidents in the Nakhichevan region which followed what official reports called days of rioting along the border.

At the same time, about 10,000 Azerbaijanis demonstrated in the republic's capital, Baku. They forced senior Communist Party officials to call off a tour of the border area, journalist Nazim Ragimov told Reuters.

The Soviet Foreign Ministry said Thursday that it had closed not only the border area but also Baku to foreign journalists.

Gorbachev met for more than five hours Thursday in Moscow with the leaders of Lithuania's breakaway party, who said afterward he failed to sway them from their decision to split off from the 20-million-member ruling Communist Party and pursue local independence.

The policy-making Central Committee of the national party has directed Gorbachev to travel to Lithuania to try to mend the split. Dates for the trip have not been officially announced, but Gorbachev had originally been expected to travel to the Baltic republic right after the New Year's holiday.

Then no. 2 party leader in Lithuania, Vladimir Berizov, said Thursday the visit is now expected Jan. 10-12.

Berizov predicted after talks with Gorbachev that the Kremlin would not force the republic's Communist Party to reverse its decision to split with Moscow.

Hinting at a possible reconciliation with the Kremlin ahead of Gorbachev's visit to the rebel republic next week, Berizov said the Soviet leader understood his people's aspirations.

He told Lithuanian radio in an interview after talks with Gorbachev that he believed "there would not be any attempt to stop implementation of our decision."

E. Germans say no to West's dirty laundry

EAST BERLIN (R) — Worried that West Germans might take advantage of low prices on the Eastern side of the Berlin Wall, East Germany's cabinet has decided to ban non-residents from using too many of its services. Landscapers, drycleaners, shoe repairs, opticians and camping stores are among the shops that now have the right to demand identity papers from customers with suspiciously large orders, government spokesman Wolfgang Meyer said. "Obviously we're not going to stop someone who goes into a barber shop for a trim," he added.

China claims world's lowest crime rate

PEKING (R) — The Chinese enjoy the lowest crime rate on Earth but suffer from great anxiety about lawlessness, said a report by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences released Friday. Chinese were more afraid than Americans to walk the streets at night, said the report given at an international symposium on urban anthropology and quoted by the official New China News Agency. Of 15,000 Chinese surveyed, 49 per cent said they feared venturing out alone after dark, against 38 per cent of Americans in a similar poll, it said. China's overall crime rate was a mere six per thousand people, compared with 515 per thousand in the United States, the report said. Japan had 128 crimes per thousand and the Soviet Union 106 per thousand. Another report said economic crimes since 1984 exceeded violent crimes in post-reform China. Included among economic crimes were embezzlement, counterfeiting, smuggling and tax evasion. It listed no figures. The report said Chinese tax dodgers avoided 11 billion yuan (\$2.3 billion) in taxes between January and October last year.

Soviets begin 'orbiting perestroika'

WASHINGTON (R) — The Soviet Union is cashing in on its long lead over the United States in the space station business by selling rides to U.S. and other Western clients for big bucks. "It's orbiting perestroika," said John Logsdon, an American space expert, referring to Kremlin chief Mikhail Gorbachev's policy of economic restructuring. "The Soviets are aggressively marketing the capability, and why not?" Logsdon said of the Soviet space station Mir's ability to stay in space for months at a time. "They've got it and nobody else has." Mir's first commercial payload, an American pharmaceutical experiment, took off last month. But the U.S. challenge, the space station Freedom, is not due to start operations until June 1996. U.S. experts attribute Moscow's commercial marketing of Mir to a budget squeeze and increased need to justify the cost of the space programme, including the \$11 billion the Soviet government claims to have invested in the space station. "They're saying, 'we need money, you're businessmen, we'll sell you anything — if the price is right,'" said Jeff Manber, executive director of the Washington-based space foundation. "The Soviet space programme now reflects the general desire of the nation as a whole to be more market-oriented," he added.

Global weather (major world cities)

	MM	T	W	Weather
AMSTERDAM	02	36	40	Cloudy
ATHENS	00	32	05	41 Cloudy
BAHRAIN	23	81	21	70 Clear
BANGKOK	23	73	34	92 Clear
Buenos Aires	20	69	81	88 Clear
CAIRO	11	52	18	64 Cloudy
CHICAGO	01	31	08	46 Cloudy
COPENHAGEN	01	31	37	57 Cloudy
FRANKFURT	00	32	07	45 Cloudy
GENEVA	02	28	00	32 Cloudy
HONG KONG	16	81	18	64 Clear
ISTANBUL	02	28	01	34 Clear
LONDON	06	49	48	Cloudy
LOS ANGELES	07	44	18	65 Clear
MADRID	01	34	11	52 Clear
MECCA	22	72	27	81 Cloudy
MONTREAL	02	36	05	43 Rain
MOSCOW	18	03	13	09 Cloudy
NEW DELHI	08	42	17	63 Clear
NEW YORK	03	37	48	Cloudy
PARIS	02	25	05	41 Cloudy
ROME	00	32	11	52 Clear
SINGAPORE	17	83	21	75 Cloudy
TOKYO	02	36	11	62 Clear
VIENNA	X	X	X	X

X - Indicates missing information.

Pakistan train disaster death toll reaches 307

SANGI, Pakistan (AP) — Police issued arrest warrants for three employees of a rural train station in connection with Pakistan's worst rail disaster, which killed at least 307 people, officials said Friday.

Railway spokesmen said an improperly-set switch apparently sent the crowded passenger train hurtling into a parked freight train early Thursday near the south eastern city of Sukkur.

"We cannot rule out sabotage or a conspiracy," said Minister for Railways Zafar Leghari, who visited the accident scene at Sangi village, 360 kilometres north of the port city of Karachi.

He said he based his suspicion on the disappearance of the Sangi station manager and two switchmen immediately after the accident. Police have issued warrants for their arrest.

Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto toured hospitals in the nearby

city of Sukkur and declared a "national tragedy."

She said she had ordered dual investigations, by the judiciary and Pakistan Railways.

Army troops cordoned off piles of twisted and mangled steel as about 1,000 rescue workers spent a second day cutting through crushed passenger cars in search of bodies or survivors.

Rescue officials said at least 307 bodies had been recovered and that they had counted at least 340 injured people.

Dr. Gulzar Ahmad Sheikh, a surgeon in Sukkur district, estimated the number of people treated since the accident at about 700. He said many victims were treated and released at first aid stations.

Railway officials said there appeared to be more bodies still trapped in the first three cars of the wreck.

Romania's new leaders declare amnesty for political prisoners

BUCHAREST (R) — Romania's new leaders, trying to win the trust of a sceptical population, have granted an amnesty to political prisoners and vowed to press on with the first free elections for four decades in April.

The National Salvation Front, which took power after Communist dictator Nicolae Ceausescu was overthrown on Dec. 22, also said the Soviet Union had promised to help rebuild the shattered economy and supply oil and gas to help overcome winter hardships.

The front issued a decree Thursday evening giving amnesty to all political prisoners sentenced after 1947. The pardon will also cover prisoners sentenced to a maximum of three years for crimes committed before Dec. 22 except murder, rape, robbery, bribery and attempts to escape.

The front said the Communist Party of Ceausescu, executed with his wife Elena on Christmas Day, was "terminated" and said the front's members would campaign in the elections.

Many Romanians fear April is too soon to hold elections in a country where most of the 23 million people have never voted in a multi-party poll in their lives.

But in an effort to allay suspicions that old faces associated with the Ceausescu regime could reappear in the revolutionary

leadership, front executive committee spokesman Silviu Brucan told a news conference:

"The Communist Party was never part of the revolutionary process. It never dissociated itself from the dictatorship, in the minds of the people it is inescapably associated with it, and that is why it is finished, terminated."

Brucan, himself a former party member, said the front would not form itself into a party but would field candidates in the April elections.

The discredited Communist Party has called for a special congress to disband itself but Brucan said: "We would greatly welcome them taking part in the elections."

He also denied reports that members of the front had conspired for months to topple Ceausescu, saying they were "born of the 100 per cent spontaneous uprising of Dec. 22."

Western diplomats said it would have been virtually impossible for any major conspiracy to be mounted in the "big brother" police state run by Ceausescu's dreaded Securitate secret police forces.

Romania is preparing for its highest-ranking foreign guest since the revolution, Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze, who is due to arrive Saturday.

"We have promises from the top level (in the Soviet Union) that we shall receive help and energy, both crude and gas," Brucan said.

"This is how we shall be able to overcome the hardships of this winter and be able to supply power and heat in villages and cities."

Ceausescu's madcap drive to conserve energy left his people shivering through winters in unit and poorly heated homes.

The deposed dictator liked to portray himself as the East Bloc's only independent-minded politician, frequently defying the Kremlin on foreign policy. The stance earned him kudos in the West but chilled his relations with Moscow.

Brucan played down suggestions that Shevardnadze's visit could be marred by differences over Romania's former territory of Bessarabia, annexed by the Soviet Union under a secret deal with Hitler during World War II.

"For the National Salvation Front there is no problem of Bessarabia," Brucan said.

He said the security situation in Romania was under control following days of heavy fighting in which several thousand people were killed after Ceausescu was overthrown. But heavily armed paratroopers guarded him at his new conference.

Bulgarian Communists hint at new purge of hardliners

SOFIA (R) — Bulgaria's new Communist leadership has hinted at a purge of hardliners who survived a round of expulsions after the overthrow of former party leader Todor Zhivkov.

"A good broom will clean not only the centre but the lower floors of the party. The party has to be cleansed of all discredited functionaries," government spokesman Ivan Angelov told reporters Thursday.

Speaking after talks with members of unofficial opposition groups which have flourished since Zhivkov's removal on Nov. 10, he said the shake-up of the party would take place before the party congress scheduled for Jan. 30.

Under new Communist Party leader Petar Mladenov, Zhivkov was expelled from the party along with his son Vladimir and Milko Balev, both former politburo members. Mladenov promoted young reformists to full politburo membership.

Other victims of the purge were the unpopular former Interior Minister General Georgi Tanov, blamed by the opposition for an October police attack on the unofficial group Eco-Glasnost.

Angelov gave no indication who would be toppled under the new purge.

But a Western diplomat in Sofia said one unconfirmed report suggested up to 75 per cent of the policy-making Central Committee would go by the end of the month.

The Communist Party voted itself out of power on Dec. 15 and

the National Assembly is expected to scrap a clause in the constitution which guaranteed the Communists a monopoly for four decades.

Mladenov has called for free multi-party elections by June and has spoken of readiness to share power with the opposition.

But the Union of Democratic Forces (UDF), the umbrella organisation loosely grouping 11 independent opposition groups, has said it refuses to share power with "discredited totalitarian structures."

The two sides agreed during preliminary talks Wednesday an agenda for formal talks to begin between Jan. 16 and 24.

They said in a joint statement they agreed to discuss a new political system, a reform of the judicial system including new electoral laws and socio-economic problems.

Among the demands put forward by the UDF was the provision of suitable premises for the opposition, their own newspaper and free time on radio and television.

New Forum and Democratic Awakening have both threatened to walk out of the talks, a move Modrov fears would be destabilising and destructive for the elections.

The opposition leaders contend the Communists have an unfair political advantage while they control the government, and opinion polls suggest voters have relatively strong trust in Modrov's leadership.

The newly independent Christian Democratic Union drew the second-strongest support with only 7.9 per cent. The Christian Democrats had for decades been aligned with and dominated by the Communists. But they broke away and reorganised last month, emphasising their church roots in this predominantly religious nation.

Five of the six opposition groups now represented by Election Alliance 90 polled support in the latest survey, but together they commanded only 14.3 per cent of the vote. New Forum was the most popular with 5.8 per cent, followed by the Social Democrats with 5.4.

6 E. German parties unite to challenge Communists in polls

EAST BERLIN (AP) — Six pro-democracy opposition groups have banded together to create a force likely to pose a serious threat to the Communist Party in national elections set for May.

Also Thursday, the East German News Agency ADN reported that the security cordon imposed around the opulent Wandlitz residential compound, where ousted Communist leader Erich Honecker lives has been removed and that a team of doctors will determine whether he was fit to be jailed.

Meanwhile, the East German army announced that the compulsory term for military service was being cut from 18 months to 12 months.

In an attempt to protect the embattled ideology of socialism in East Germany, the Communist Party has positioned itself for the May 6 balloting as the defender of democracy against the designs of greedy capitalists and a resurgence of neo-fascism.

The Communists still draw more voter support than any other single political party, and an anti-fascist rally they sponsored on Wednesday night drew

up to 250,000 participants, according to some estimates.

Putting aside broad differences in their principles and objectives, the main opposition movements decided to band together in hopes that a united election drive can overcome the Communists' continued dominance.

"It's certainly clear that if we don't work together we will fail together," said Detlef Poggendorf, the largest of the nation's pro-democracy organizations with 200,000 members.

The coalition joins New Forum with the Social Democratic Party, Democratic Awakening, Democracy Now, the Initiative for Peace and Human Rights and the United Left.

Steffen Reiche of the Social Democrats announced the decision to form "Election Alliance 90" during an interview with West Berlin television.

Among the reasons cited for cooperation among the groups that to date have espoused varying policies was the perception that the Communists are "forcing the opposition into a tighter corner."

Reiche said leaflets distributed

at an anti-fascist demonstration, called by the Communists in East Berlin Wednesday night, suggested that his Social Democrats were in sympathy with the aims of right-wing radicals.

Leaders of the Democracy Now group have advocated a gradual reunification with West Germany, while New Forum and the Social Democrats contend East German sovereignty must be protected.

The decree to which Western investment should be encouraged to ease the economic crisis has also been a matter of dispute among the opposition forces, as have specific environmental policies like whether nuclear energy should be relied on instead of the polluting brown coal that fires much of the nation's industry.

In addition to different political views among the groups, some of the memberships are split internally.

One branch of New Forum plans a founding congress in Leipzig on Jan. 27, while the main group says it will not take on the status of a political party and has divorced itself from the renegade branch.

Reiche has rejected any association of his party with the right, and said the opposition groups have grown to realise their only chance of overcoming the Communists as a bloc.

The Communists were stripped of their constitutional mandate to rule on Dec. 1, after hard-liner Honecker was ousted by massive pro-democracy demonstrations in the fall.

That decision by the Communist-controlled parliament reduced the party to the same status as other political forces in East Germany, transferring leadership to the head of government instead of the party chief.

Reformist Premier Hans Modrov is a Communist Party member and enjoys more public trust than any other figure in the national political scene. But the opposition forces contend his government is transitional and has limited authority to decide how the nation should proceed with reforms.

Bowing to demands of New Forum, Modrov earlier this week invited the political groups represented at weekly talks on the nation's future to form a commi-

tee to advise his cabinet.

New Forum and Democratic Awakening have both threatened to walk out of the talks, a move Modrov fears would be destabilising and destructive for the elections.

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